REMEMBERING BRITAIN'S NATIONAL PICTURE STRIP WEEKLY - EAGLE, 1950 - 1969

EAGLE Times

Vol. 22 No. 3 Autumn 2009

The Career of Gerry Embleton

IT'LL SEEM LIKE FIVE MINUTES INSIDE THE SUSPENDED ANIMATION TANKS! GOOD OLD EARTH! IT'S GOING TO BE GREAT TO GET HOME!
YOU SAID IT!
DARE

EAGLE Times

Vol 22 No 3 Autumn 2009

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Annual Subscription : U.K. £22, Overseas £34 (In £s Sterling please)
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Danny Dare

Gerry Embleton's Dan Dare

Dimworthy

John Ryan's Tweed and Pugwash

Steve Larrabee

Publication Dates

31st March, 30th June,

30th September, 14th December

Eagle Times on the web:

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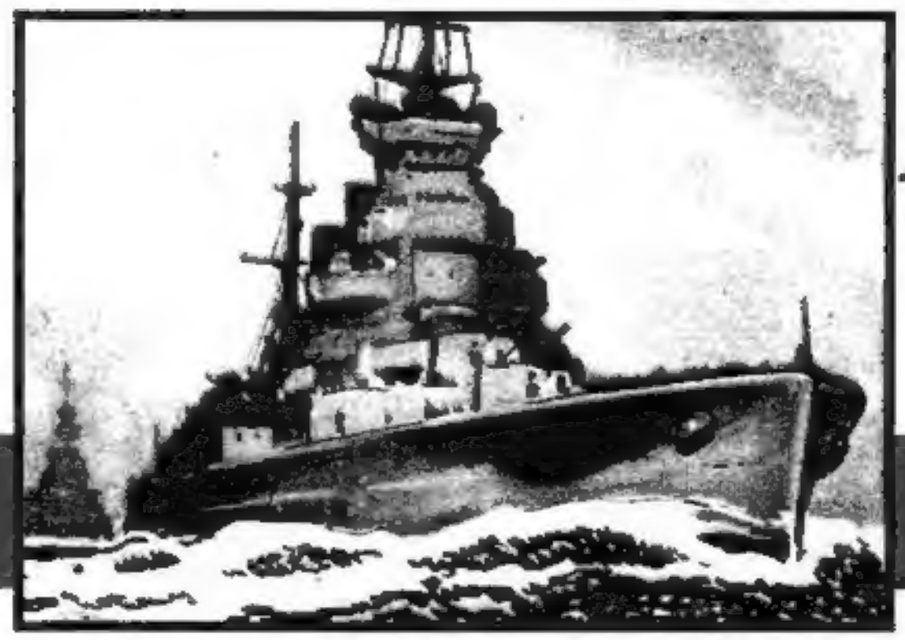


The quarterly journal of the *Eagle Society*.

The *Society* is dedicated to the memory of Britain's National picture strip Weekly - ***EAGLE***.

Hello again,

Sadly, once again, we mourn the loss of another great contributor to ***Eagle****: John Ryan. John worked for Hulton's children's papers for 13 years and then went on to find fame working in television and the children's book world. When the* ***Eagle Society*** *met up with him and his wife Priscilla for a week-end in Rye during 1993, John was the perfect gentleman. He gave a most interesting talk on his time at Hulton Press and on the Sunday morning gave us a conducted tour of the town. Later he treated us to lunch and followed this with an hilarious part in a Harris Tweed play. A Society tribute to John you will find inside written by a long time admirer of John's work, Steve Winders. You will also find the fond recollections of Bill Rudling.*

Our main feature is part one of the Gerry Embleton story by Alan Vince. Once again Alan has come up with some very interesting information on this very prolific artist who drew the first series of Dan Dare in the 1980's new ***Eagle****.*

Several members have said how much they enjoyed the feature on Tom Adams and the natural world in our last issue. Continuing this theme we look at the work of another artist who drew several natural history strips for ***Eagle****: George Backhouse. George had a very pleasant style and we have found out that even when he couldn't continue to draw a strip he was scripting it.*

Danny Dare, Dan Dare's biggest fan, according to Wham! comic, has featured before but in this issue Jeremy Briggs takes an in-depth look at the character. Steve Winders has another two articles within: a look at school stories in ***Eagle*** *and a review of the latest radio play featuring 'Journey into Space'.*

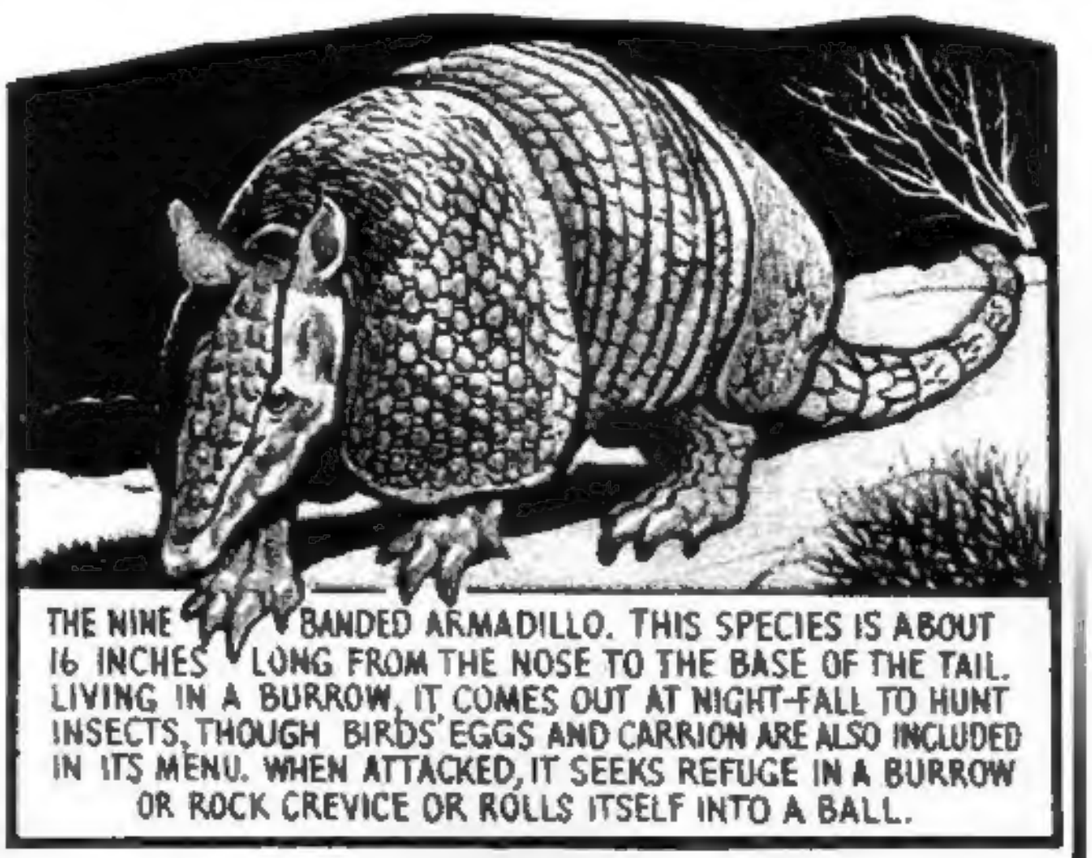
Several new members joined recently and we warmly welcome them aboard the ***Eagle Society****. We put this down to the web site we have, so many thanks to Will Grenham for keeping it updated and putting new members our way. A good thing about new members is that after receiving a magazine they usually want back list and this has led to a very nice little money earner for the Society.*

Things to look forward to in the Christmas issue: Alan Vince talks about his many visits to the homes of some well loved ***Eagle*** *artists, and Alan concludes his article on Gerry Embleton, concentrating on 'Dan Dare' from the new* ***Eagle****. Our look at artists who drew nature study strips in* ***Eagle*** *continues with a piece about the very first nature artist, John Dyke, and we look at a series that John Worsley drew in Treasure magazine.*

Hope you enjoy our efforts

Best Wishes

'The Team'


THE NINE BANDED ARMADILLO. THIS SPECIES IS ABOUT 16 INCHES LONG FROM THE NOSE TO THE BASE OF THE TAIL. LIVING IN A BURROW, IT COMES OUT AT NIGHT-FALL TO HUNT INSECTS, THOUGH BIRDS' EGGS AND CARRION ARE ALSO INCLUDED IN ITS MENU. WHEN ATTACKED, IT SEEKS REFUGE IN A BURROW OR ROCK CREVICE OR ROLLS ITSELF INTO A BALL.

DIMWORTHY and Co.

Steve Winders explores the school strip stories from the sixties *EAGLE*.

School-based stories, which were a vital element of boys' comics before the Second World War and continued to be popular in many afterwards, were not a prominent feature of the fifties *EAGLE*. The paper ran no strip stories about school life and although it included specially commissioned text stories of 'Rex Milligan', followed by the 'Three 'J's' and then 'Jim Starling', text stories were not as popular with readers as strips, regardless of their quality. When *EAGLE* began, its most revolutionary feature was its predominance of picture strips, which were the secret of its success. It was "Britain's National Strip Cartoon Weekly".

In the sixties, *EAGLE* was a different bird and included three school-based strips, starting with 'Cornelius Dimworthy' in Volume 15 Number 23, the issue dated 6th June 1964. He was joined briefly by 'Billy Binns and His Wonderful Specs' four months later when *EAGLE* absorbed *Boys' World* on 10th October 1964. This strip had begun in *Boys' World* in July 1963 and ended in *EAGLE* in early January 1965, running for only three months in the combined paper because of its similarity to the popular Dimworthy strip. However 'Billy Binns' had run concurrently in Odhams' humorous *Wham!* comic since that publication's start in June 1964 and continued there until November 1965. Dimworthy's adventures ended in October 1967 and the following week he was replaced by 'Mickey Merlin', which ran until March 1969, finishing just eight weeks before *EAGLE*'s merger with *Lion* in May.

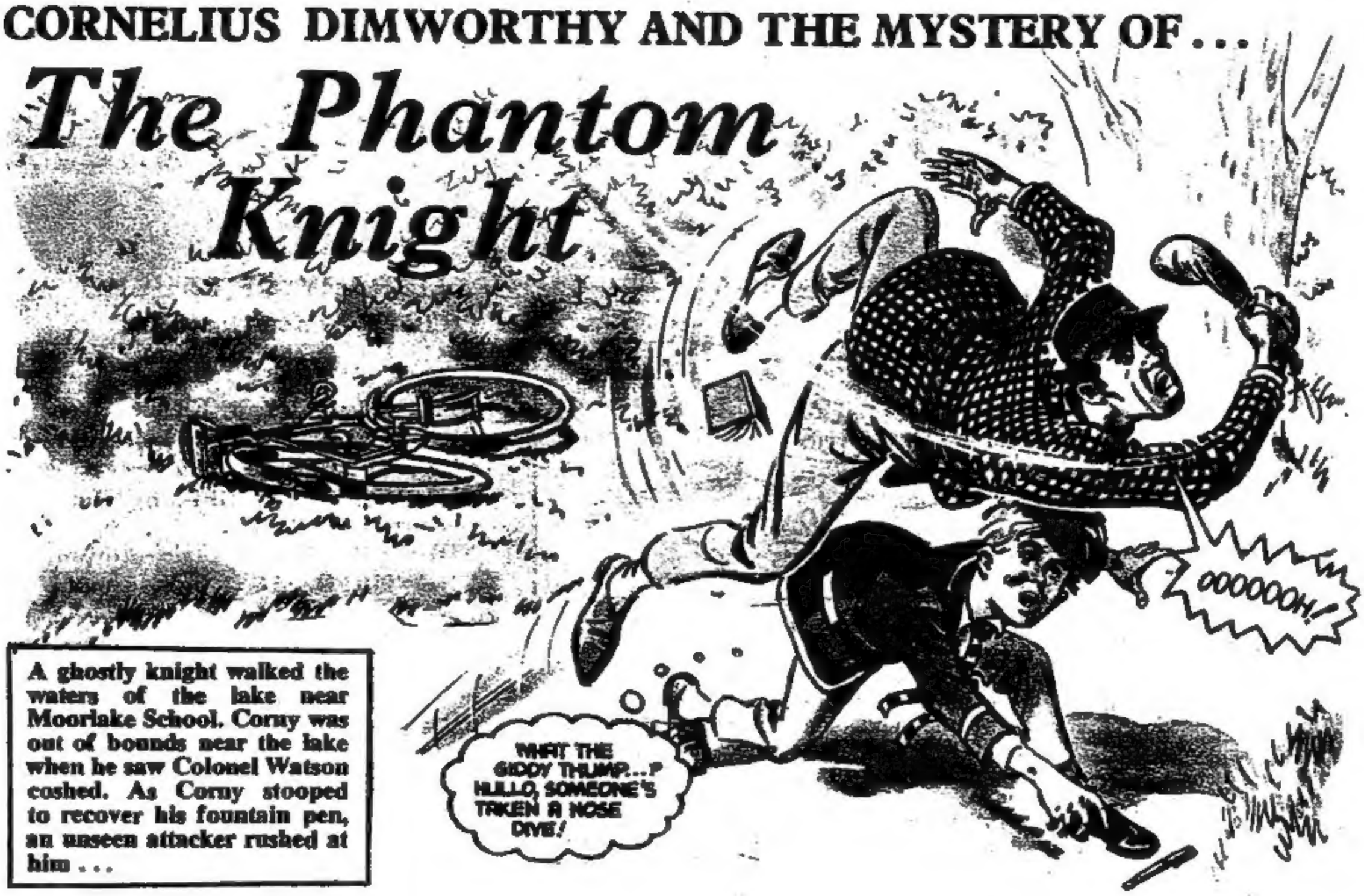
The sixties *EAGLE* also occasionally featured serialised text versions of some of Anthony Buckeridge's already famous 'Jennings' stories, about a boy attending a preparatory boarding school. Although Buckeridge had originally cre-

NEXT MORNING...
IF ONLY I COULD FIND A WAY TO DODGE CLASS!
MAKE UP, DIMWOOOORTHY! YOU'RE LATE!
HA! HA! HA!
FILL MY INKWELL! SINCE YOU CAN'T BE INTELLIGENT, YOU CAN BE USEFUL...
IN
HE'S A NICE CHAP— NOBODY LIKES HIM!
I THINK DIMWORTHY'S ABOUT TO HAVE A STROKE OF BAD LUCK...

Cornelius Dimworthy in class

CORNELIUS DIMWORTHY AND THE MYSTERY OF . . .

The Phantom Knight

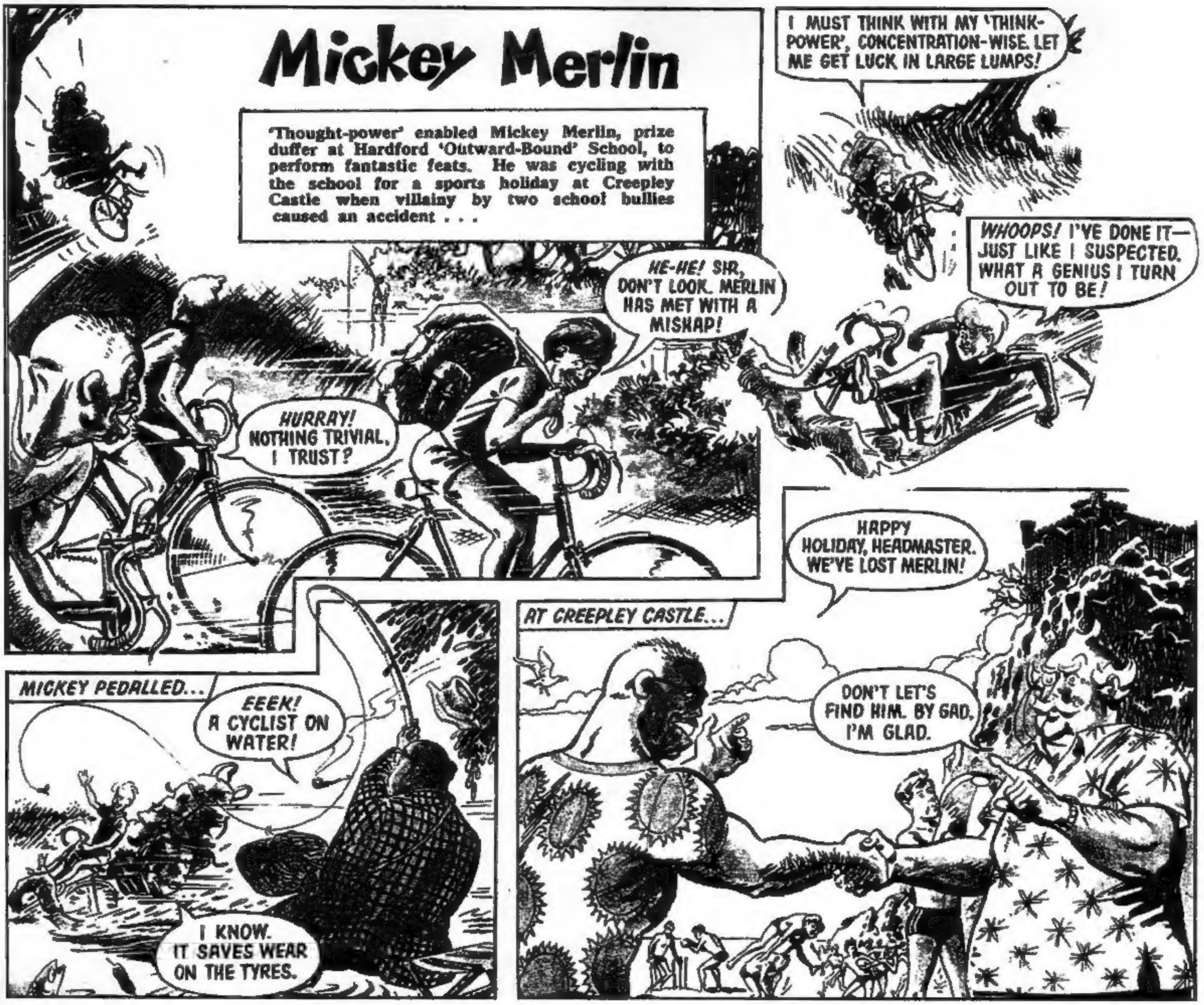

A ghostly knight walked the waters of the lake near Moorlake School. Corny was out of bounds near the lake when he saw Colonel Watson coshed. As Corny stooped to recover his fountain pen, an unseen attacker rushed at him . . .
WHAT THE GIDDY THUMP...? HULLO, SOMEONE'S TAKEN A NOSE DIVE!
OOOOOOH!

ated Rex Milligan especially for *EAGLE*, Jennings' adventures were adapted from his books.

In the finest tradition of the sixties *EAGLE*, both Billy Binns and Mickey Merlin had special powers. Clumsy Billy Binns acquired a pair of glasses which transformed him into a brilliantly talented sportsman and the equally inept Mickey Merlin was able to perform remarkable physical feats after a meteorite fell close to him. Although Dimworthy had no special powers he enjoyed incredible luck. Whatever scrapes he got himself into, usually because of his daydreaming personality, his luck would save him. This provided the scope for much funnier situations than the special powers stories and also parodied the ridiculous luck that protected fictional adventure heroes in comics, including *EAGLE* itself, novels, television and films.

Unlike Rex Milligan, Jim Starling and the Three 'J's, who went to day schools, Dimworthy, Billy Binns and Mickey Merlin attended boarding schools. Mickey Merlin attended Hardford Outward Bound School, which the stories show was a boarding school with a strong emphasis on outdoor pursuits and not just an outdoor activity centre. A significant majority of *EAGLE* readers in both the fifties and sixties did not attend boarding schools, so the fifties *EAGLE* may have preferred stories of day school boys because it placed greater emphasis on providing characters that the readers could identify with.

WHAT WAS LUCKY FOR CORNY WAS NOT LUCKY FOR HIS ATTACKER...
I BET HE MEANT TO PART MY HAIR WITH THAT COSH. SORRIES AIM AIGHT. HMMM—SLEEPING BEAUTY HAS DROPPED HIS DIARY!


Mickey Merlin
'Thought-power' enabled Mickey Merlin, prize duffer at Hardford 'Outward-Bound' School, to perform fantastic feats. He was cycling with the school for a sports holiday at Creepley Castle when villainy by two school bullies caused an accident . . .
I MUST THINK WITH MY 'THINK-POWER', CONCENTRATION-WISE. LET ME GET LUCK IN LARGE LUMPS!
WHOOPS! I'VE DONE IT— JUST LIKE I SUSPECTED. WHAT A GENIUS I TURN OUT TO BE!
HE-HE! SIR, DON'T LOOK. MERLIN HAS MET WITH A MISHAP!
HURRAY! NOTHING TRIVIAL, I TRUST?
HAPPY HOLIDAY, HEADMASTER. WE'VE LOST MERLIN!
AT CREEPLEY CASTLE...
DON'T LET'S FIND HIM. BY GAD, I'M GLAD.
MICKEY PEDALLED...
EEEK! A CYCLIST ON WATER!
I KNOW. IT SAVES WEAR ON THE TYRES.

Unlike the sixties *EAGLE*, there were no characters with super powers and even 'Dan Dare' - a strip set in the future - featured a hero who embodied contemporary values. An important feature of the fifties *EAGLE* was its back page accounts of the lives of saints or famous Britons, who were deliberately chosen as good examples to readers. While the sixties *EAGLE* featured characters who observed positive moral codes there was no deliberate policy of presenting role models for the readers. 'PC49', the London bobby of the fifties *EAGLE*, was replaced as the paper's contemporary crime fighter by 'U.F.O. Agents', one of whom could turn into smoke, and the Iron Man who could hardly serve as a role model as he was a robot! Consequently the school stories were set in the more exotic world of boarding schools, with opportunities for adventure after dark, midnight feasts, haunted corridors, interesting localities and no parents. Parents rarely figure prominently in children's stories as they are comfort and safety figures. Teachers, who are authority figures, are quite a different matter. They can be safety figures or problem-causers, depending on the situation and their individual personalities. They can also be objects of ridicule and never was this more so than in Cornelius Dimworthy's adventures, when they were regularly drenched with water, squirted with ink or had piles of books or rubble collapse on top of them, all quite by accident.

All three strips were written by Edward Cowan, who also wrote 'Blackbow the Cheyenne' and 'U.F.O. Agent' in *EAGLE*. Several other common factors link these school serials. They each occupied a single page in black and white every week, they were all humorous, and their heroes were all loners. *EAGLE*'s fifties school stories included humour, but were essentially serious adventures.

Their heroes all had close friends and were popular with their classmates. Although Dimworthy, Billy Binns and Mickey Merlin achieved some popularity as a consequence of the success they achieved through their special powers or luck, they had no close friends and were all initially ridiculed by their peers.

I am sure that it is no coincidence that these three heroes share this characteristic. I believe it indicates a development in school stories which had been evolving since Thomas Hughes' *Tom Brown's Schooldays* had established the genre back in 1857. The development can be traced through the 'Greyfriars School' stories in the *Magnet Library* from their start in 1908. The early stories focused on Harry Wharton and his friends, with an emphasis on fair play, camaraderie and team work. Soon an initially minor humorous character called Billy Bunter became the most popular character and the stories gradually began to revolve around him. However Bunter was not a successful hero. He was greedy, obese and unpleasant to others and his self centred schemes always ended in failure. He was an object of ridicule. From the unfortunate Bunter, whose adventures continued in novels and in strip form in

Mickey Merlin
Mickey Merlin was the most clumsy, awkward boy at Hardford 'Outward Bound' School. Then something strange happened when he fell into water in which a meteorite had just dissolved . . .
I'M SORT OF THINKING LIKE TARZAN. MOREOVER— I'M FEELING LIKE TARZAN! I'VE COME OVER ALL AGILE AND UNBUNGLY JUNGLY!
CAN IT BE SUN-STROKE— OR IS THAT MERLIN?
S-SIR, HE'S TRAVELLING LIKE A JET-PROPELLED CHIMP!
HARDFORD SCHOOL
CONCENTRATION SEEMS TO DO IT! A CASE OF THINK-POWER! I AM TARZAN! I MUST DO IT SOME MORE!
WOOSH!
SIR, YOU'VE PUT YOUR CHEST IN MY WAY. YIKES— I'M OUT OF CONTROL!
SNAP!
MERLIN, HAVE A CARE! WE'RE BELOW!
HARDFORD SCHOOL

Knockout and then *Valiant* comics during the sixties, the genre moved on to the amusing solitary figure emerging as the real hero, as in 'Cornelius Dimworthy' and the others.

In a much shorter time scale 'Billy Binns and His Wonderful Specs' partly echoed the development of Billy Bunter because this strip was preceded by an adventure strip called 'The Boys of Castleford School', which focused on three boys from the school. This story began in the first issue of *Boys' World* and became 'Billy Binns' in issue 24, when the paper was given a major relaunch, complete with free gift and new stories, another of which was the future *EAGLE* stalwart 'The Iron Man'. Now the three original heroes made occasional appearances as Billy took centre stage.

'Billy Binns and His Wonderful Specs' marked a radical departure from earlier school stories where boys who wore spectacles were invariably presented as reluctant sportsmen. Billy's new spectacles were what made him a brilliant sportsman, turning this convention on its head.

Drawn by Bill Mainwaring, the strip was produced in a slightly cartoon style, just as 'Cornelius Dimworthy' and 'Mickey Merlin' were. However these three strips owed more in art style to the adventure strips than to overtly funny cartoons such as 'Fidosaurus' or 'Harris Tweed', where a character's features were either greatly exaggerated or understated for humorous effect, indicating that despite their humour they were also telling exciting stories with plenty of tension and thrills.

Despite initially inheriting several characters from 'The Boys of Castleford School', 'Billy Binns' did not feature many long-term recurring characters. Beefy Paget, Tom Bannister and Benbow, the heroes of the earlier strip, played no significant part in the new strip and were gradually phased out. A prefect called Tanfield from the earlier strip was more involved, as he ran the school cricket team which Billy joined when his new spectacles changed him into a gifted sportsman. However he was not given any distinctive character traits. A new character was the mean spirited bully Middleton, who lost his place in the cricket team to Billy and spent the first few stories plotting his downfall. Middleton was assisted by his friends Snook and Perrin, but again apart from their unpleasant dispositions, none of these characters had any interesting qualities and served only to further the plots.

Of the three strips 'Billy Binns' placed the least emphasis on humour. There were no notable amusing teachers and all the comedy came from situations. The stories focused strongly on Billy's performances in sport and much of the tension was created by issues related to his spectacles. When Billy got his 'wonderful specs', he actually got two pairs. He must have gone to Specsavers! One pair gave him extraordinary abilities but the other did not and despite the fact that Billy felt a change come over him the moment he put them on, he failed to realise that the spectacles were the source of his new strength. Consequently whenever he wore the other spectacles or none at all he performed disastrously.

In contrast to 'Billy Binns', in the Dimworthy strip Cowan and artist Sam Fair combined their skills to create some memorable characters. First there was Cornelius Dimworthy himself. Fair-haired and fresh-faced, in appearance he could have been the boyhood version of many of *EAGLE*'s heroes. Only his untidy hair and mischievous grin gave any indication of his personality. Dimworthy had obsessive crazes. He would focus on his latest scheme to the exclusion of all else. These crazes usually formed the basis of the stories. For example Dimworthy's single minded determination to win a photography competition led to the events of the 1965 story 'The Haunted Lighthouse' when he took a photograph of an unidentified flying object next to the lighthouse of the title! Dimworthy would daydream in class about his latest obsession and suffer the wrath of his teachers. He would swarm up and down the ivy-clad walls of the school at midnight and he would create mayhem in the school grounds and surrounding countryside, as he rode his bicycle without due care and attention in pursuit of his latest adventure. Only his incredible luck saved him from disaster.

The teaching staff who attempted to educate Dimworthy were also distinctive and credible characters, who could be readily recognised by readers in some of their real-life counterparts in British schools. A good example was Mr Kenton, who with his moustache and spectacles resembled Groucho Marx in appearance, but he was no comedian! Mr Kenton hated Dimworthy and constantly sought opportunities to catch him out and have him expelled. He was invariably on the receiving end of soakings and worse disasters.

To be continued. ❑

The Rivals of Jeff Arnold
by Cowhand Horn
No 2: Steve Larrabee
of *Lone Star* comic

Steve Larrabee had a ten-year life in the *Lone Star* comic, a publication that ran from 1952 to 1963. The comic was a vehicle for the Die Cast Machine Tool company to advertise their 'Lone Star' brand of toys such as cowboy guns and toy pistols. The character that featured on the cover was a real life cowboy called Steve Larrabee.

The cowboy had his own programme on Radio Luxembourg, sponsored by Rowntree's Cocoa. The first series was produced by Stanley Maxted and Steve would sing the 'Lone Star' song (words by Bob Mills, music by Eric Eastwell). The first episode went out on November 1st 1952 at 6.30 and was called 'The King of the Gamblers'. This story went into January 1953 and a new story, 'The Greedy Vulture', started.

A comic was published (price 4d) by DCMT to tie in with the radio series but a regular monthly comic was not published until May 1953. Fred Phillips was the editor.

After the first radio series finished a later series started on 1st November 1955 with Steve supported by Danny Levan and the Rodeo Rhythm. The show was sponsored by Empire Pools of Blackpool.

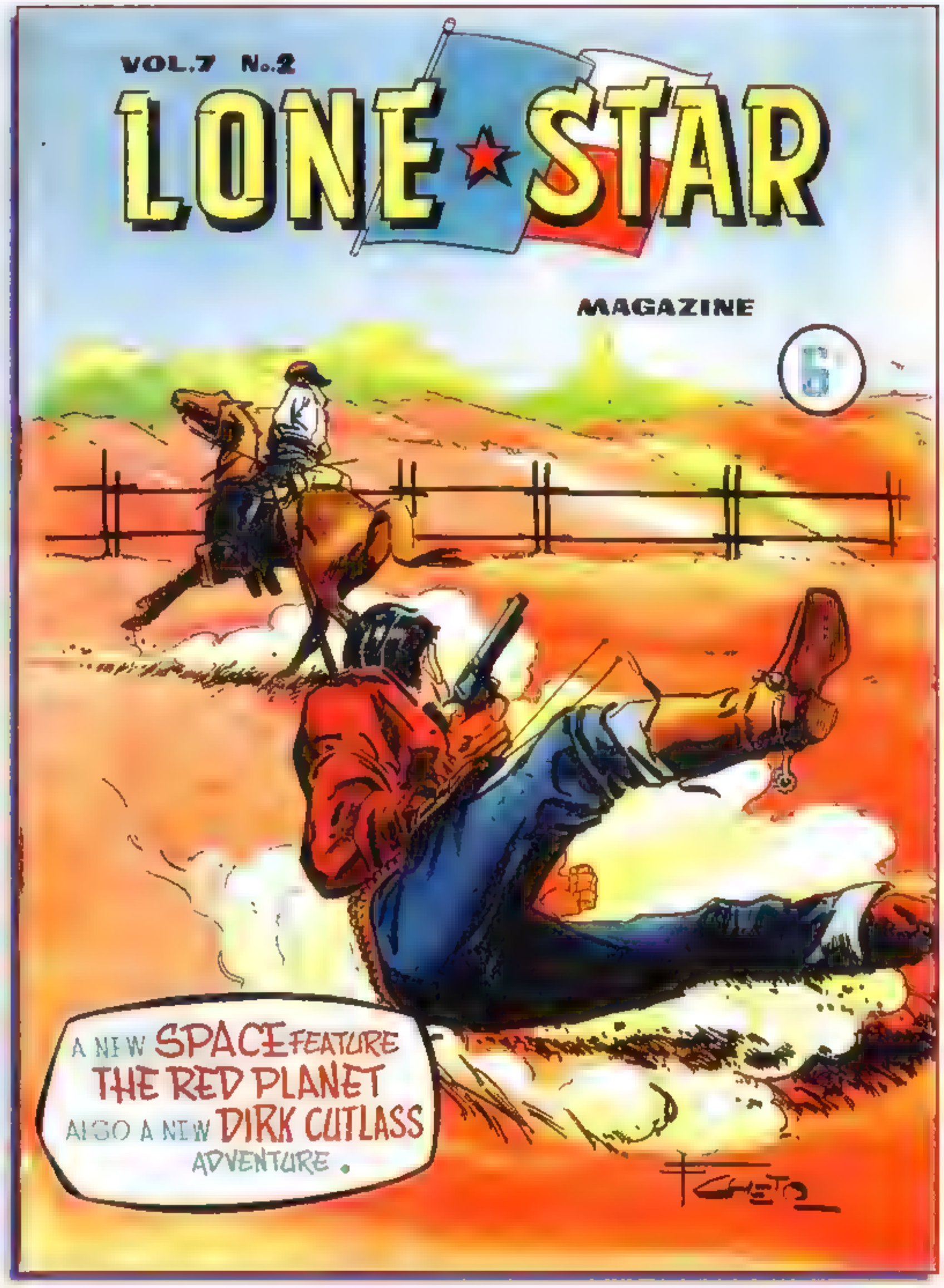
Steve toured the country promoting DCMT toys through toy fairs, exhibitions and stage shows. He was very busy visiting children in hospital with photos of his horse Smoky and his dog, Pagan.

Various artists drew Steve in the Lone Star comic. Ron and later Gerry Embleton drew some stories, as did Terry Patrick and Colin Andrew. Other uncredited artists were often used.

YAHOO! LOOK AT THOSE INJUNS RUN!
STEVE! IT'S BROCK CUSMAN—HE'S GETTING AWAY!
NOW, YOU WILL TELL ME HOW WE CAN ESCAPE FROM HERE.
I NO SPEAK.
HUH. WHAT'S THIS?

Various artists drew Larrabee

A photograph(?) of Steve Larrabee from a Lone Star Annual



Comics from 1960 and 1961

The comic was published in the American format with an average of 28 pages. There were several pages of colour but later this was reduced to just the front cover and some good illustrations were shown. These would be a cowboy scene with several artists used. The price for most of the comic's life was 6d.

Steve Larrabee would start the comic off with a full story in black and white taking about eight pages. Other stories would consist of sci-fi, pirates and true facts of the West.

Lone Star Annuals were published during the late fifties and Steve would usually have a couple of stories in each issue. One of the unusual things about these annuals was that the price (5/6) would be printed on the front cover.

The real Steve Larrabee left England in 1956 and went back to America. The *Lone Star* comic went on for 99 issues, closing in 1963. ❑

Above: the 1958 Lone Star Annual (Note the price on the cover) Below: Frames drawn by Ron Embleton

The *Eagle* art of George William Backhouse

by Howard Corn

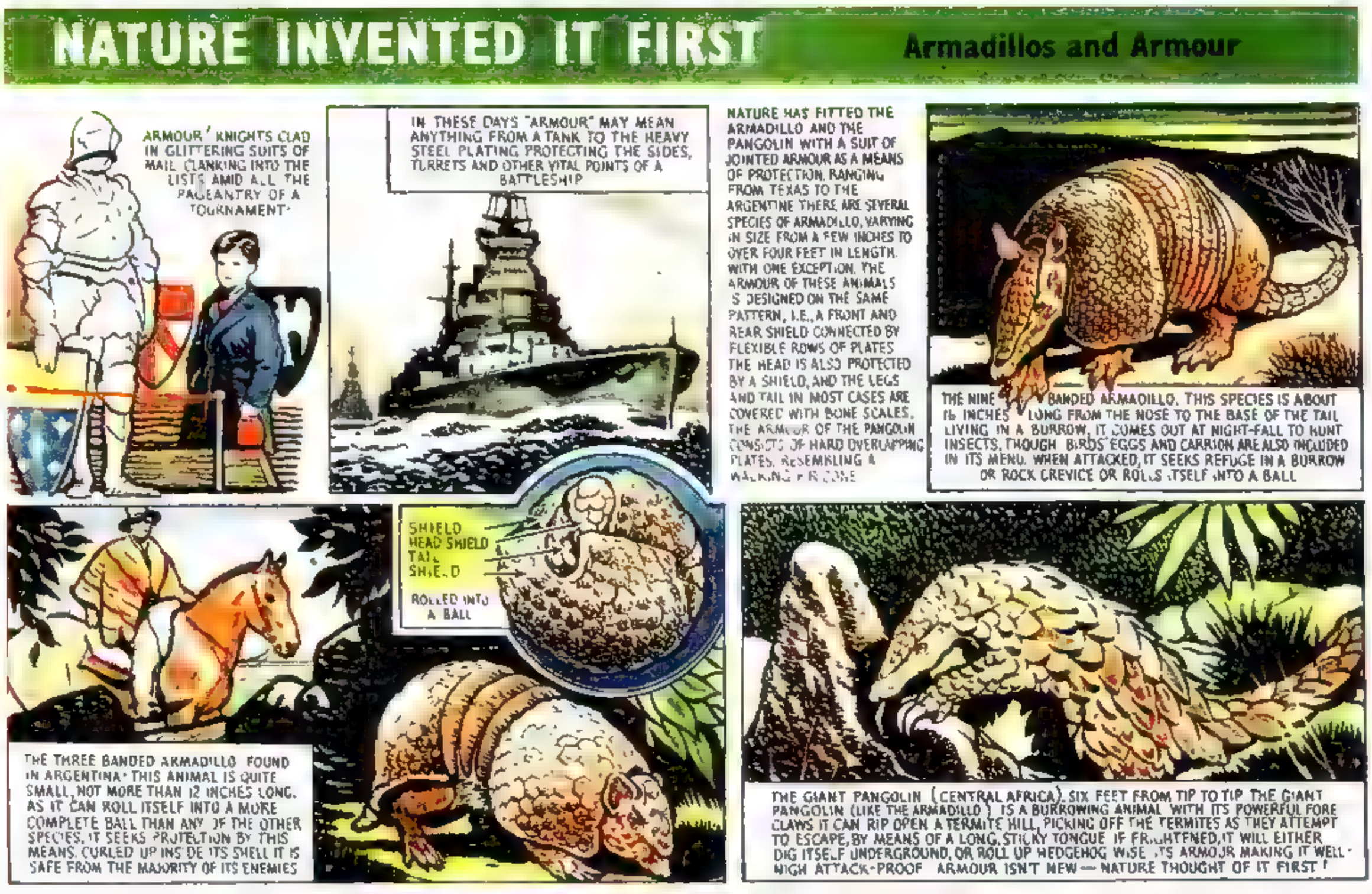
George William Backhouse was born on 16th November, 1903. He went to Heatherleys to study art and on coming out started work for Modern Art Studios.

In 1927 George landed a job illustrating a strip called 'Strongheart the Mighty' for the magazine *Comic Life*. This long-running strip was based on the the adventures of an Alsatian dog made famous by the Hollywood films of the hound. When *Comic Life* was incorporated with *My Favourite* in 1928, 'Strongheart' went over too.

Later, the dog was to be found in other take-overs. In 1934, *Sparkler* took over the comic until 1939 and then that too was taken over by *Crackers* until 1941. A break for the war and 'Strongheart' re-appeared in *Jingles* from 1944-49. Backhouse was not the illustrator throughout, but shared it with many others. In 1939 he took on 'The Stolen King' for *Comic Cuts* and later 'Buffalo Bill' for *Butterfly*.

By the early fifties, George found work with Collins Children's Books. He drew many illustrations for the company including a book I had for Christmas 1951, *The Children's Illustrated Dictionary*. How well I remember "D is for Daddy". This showed a man dressed in a business suit and trilby hat off to the office as he waved goodbye to his family standing in the doorway. Obviously aimed at the children of well-to-do parents!

Above: 'Strongheart'


NATURE INVENTED IT FIRST
Armadillos and Armour
'ARMOUR' KNIGHTS CLAD IN GLITTERING SUITS OF MAIL CLANKING INTO THE LISTS AMID ALL THE PAGEANTRY OF A TOURNAMENT
IN THESE DAYS "ARMOUR" MAY MEAN ANYTHING FROM A TANK TO THE HEAVY STEEL PLATING PROTECTING THE SIDES, TURRETS AND OTHER VITAL POINTS OF A BATTLESHIP
NATURE HAS FITTED THE ARMADILLO AND THE PANGOLIN WITH A SUIT OF JOINTED ARMOUR AS A MEANS OF PROTECTION. RANGING FROM TEXAS TO THE ARGENTINE THERE ARE SEVERAL SPECIES OF ARMADILLO, VARYING IN SIZE FROM A FEW INCHES TO OVER FOUR FEET IN LENGTH. WITH ONE EXCEPTION, THE ARMOUR OF THESE ANIMALS IS DESIGNED ON THE SAME PATTERN, I.E., A FRONT AND REAR SHIELD CONNECTED BY FLEXIBLE ROWS OF PLATES. THE HEAD IS ALSO PROTECTED BY A SHIELD, AND THE LEGS AND TAIL IN MOST CASES ARE COVERED WITH BONE SCALES. THE ARMOUR OF THE PANGOLIN CONSISTS OF HARD OVERLAPPING PLATES, RESEMBLING A
THE NINE BANDED ARMADILLO. THIS SPECIES IS ABOUT 15 INCHES LONG FROM THE NOSE TO THE BASE OF THE TAIL. LIVING IN A BURROW, IT COMES OUT AT NIGHT-FALL TO HUNT INSECTS, THOUGH BIRDS' EGGS AND CARRION ARE ALSO INCLUDED IN ITS MENU. WHEN ATTACKED, IT SEEKS REFUGE IN A BURROW OR ROCK CREVICE OR ROLLS ITSELF INTO A BALL
SHIELD
HEAD SHIELD
TAIL SHIELD
ROLLED INTO A BALL
THE THREE BANDED ARMADILLO FOUND IN ARGENTINA. THIS ANIMAL IS QUITE SMALL, NOT MORE THAN 12 INCHES LONG. AS IT CAN ROLL ITSELF INTO A MORE COMPLETE BALL THAN ANY OF THE OTHER SPECIES, IT SEEKS PROTECTION BY THIS MEANS. CURLED UP INSIDE ITS SHELL IT IS SAFE FROM THE MAJORITY OF ITS ENEMIES
THE GIANT PANGOLIN (CENTRAL AFRICA). SIX FEET FROM TIP TO TIP THE GIANT PANGOLIN (LIKE THE ARMADILLO) IS A BURROWING ANIMAL WITH ITS POWERFUL FORE CLAWS IT CAN RIP OPEN A TERMITE HILL, PICKING OFF THE TERMITES AS THEY ATTEMPT TO ESCAPE, BY MEANS OF A LONG, STICKY TONGUE. IF FRIGHTENED, IT WILL EITHER DIG ITSELF UNDERGROUND, OR ROLL UP HEDGEHOG WISE. ITS ARMOUR MAKING IT WELL-NIGH ATTACK-PROOF. ARMOUR ISN'T NEW — NATURE THOUGHT OF IT FIRST!

STRANGE ANIMAL ADVENTURES

CAPTAIN ATKINS RODE THROUGH THE WEST AFRICAN JUNGLE ON HIS CHARGER MONARCH. SUDDENLY THE ANIMAL TOOK FRIGHT AT THE SIGHT OF SEVERAL BABOONS —WHICH IT HATED AND FEARED. BUT THE CAPTAIN WAS AMAZED TO SEE THAT ONE 'BABOON' WAS HIS OWN CHILD, JACKIE, WHOM THE CREATURES MUST HAVE STOLEN FROM HIS FAR-OFF BUNGALOW.
CAPTAIN ATKINS TRIED TO MOUNT MONARCH WITH HIS YOUNG SON. BUT THE HORSE REFUSED TO CARRY WHAT HE THOUGHT WAS A BABOON. THEN THE OFFICER THOUGHT OF A WAY TO TRICK HIS SUSPICIOUS HORSE .
.. MONARCH EYED HIS MASTER, AND PERHAPS WONDERED WHAT HE WAS DOING DOWN THE JUNGLE PATH. AT ANY RATE, THAT HORRID LITTLE BABOON SEEMED TO BE OUT OF SIGHT!
MONARCH, GALLOPING DOWN THE JUNGLE PATH, WAS HAPPILY UNAWARE THAT HIS MASTER, AN EXPERT TRICK-RIDER, WAS JUST ABOUT TO DECEIVE HIM INTO CARRYING JACKIE, THE HATED 'BABOON'!
AS MONARCH SPED UNDER THE TREE CAPTAIN ATKINS SNATCHED HIS LITTLE SON FROM THE BRANCH WHERE HE HAD PREVIOUSLY PLACED HIM. AND SO MONARCH TROTTED ALONG, CARRYING NOT ONLY HIS MASTER BUT THE CHILD, UNTIL THE CAMP WAS REACHED.
ONCE HOME, MONARCH PROBABLY WONDERED WHY EVERYONE WAS SMILING SO MUCH. HE WOULD HAVE [redacted] HAD HE KNOWN THE PART HE HAD PLAYED IN RESCUING JACKIE FROM THE BABOONS

George had a passion for animals and, when he landed a job with Hulton Press in 1952, many of his coloured strips were of animals. His first coloured half page was 'Nature Invented It First' and this appeared in the *EAGLE* issue dated 11th July, the subject being 'Bats and Radar'. This series ran until 14th November 1952 and then another Backhouse series started the following week: 'Strange Animal Adventures' on 21st November 1952. This series told of some odd stories of animal behaviour from all over the world. The series finished on 13th February 1953.

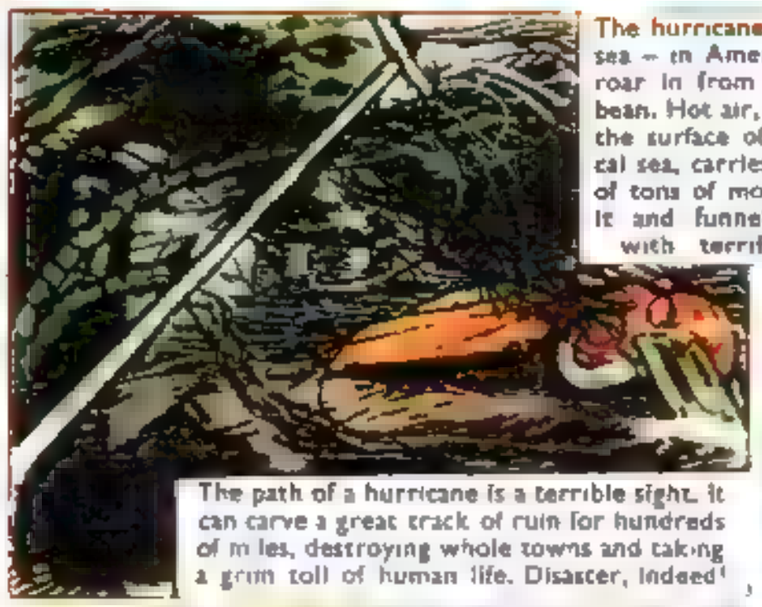
IT ISN'T TRUE !

That Collies are Treacherous

"COLLIES! OH, YES! NICE LOOKING DOGS, BUT TREACHEROUS." HOW OFTEN ONE HEARS THAT, OR SOMETHING LIKE IT. YET THE FACT IS, IT JUST ISN'T TRUE
THE COLLIE HAS BEEN A SHEEP-DOG FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS HERDING SHEEP REQUIRES NOT ONLY INTELLIGENCE, BUT AN EVEN TEMPER—IN SHORT, RELIABILITY. HAD THE COLLIE BEEN TREACHEROUS AS A BREED, IT WOULD NOT HAVE HELD ITS PLACE AS A WORKING DOG FOR SO LONG. CONTACT WITH SHEEP EXPOSES A DOG TO THE TEMPTATION TO TURN KILLER, WHICH IS WHY UNTRAINED DOGS OF ANY BREED—IF THEY ARE BIG ENOUGH—ARE SOMETIMES GUILTY OF SHEEP-WORRYING
THERE IS AN ACCOUNT OF A COLLIE EVEN TEMPERED AND LONG SUFFERING. A KITTEN AND A TERRIER PUPPY SPRAWLED ALL OVER HIM, PULLED AND BIT HIS TAIL AND PUT THEIR NOSES IN HIS DINNER DISH. YET THE BIG DOG NEVER GROWLED OR SNAPPED AND WAS EQUALLY GOOD TEMPERED WITH CHILDREN. ANOTHER COLLIE, KEPT BEFORE THIS ONE, WAS EQUALLY GOOD TEMPERED
OLD TYPE COLLIE
MODERN COLLIE
UP TILL 1860, THE COLLIE WAS ALMOST UNKNOWN OUTSIDE ITS NATIVE SCOTLAND. SINCE THEN IT HAS CHANGED A LOT IN APPEARANCE ORIGINALLY A MORE HEAVILY BUILT, BLUNT NOSED ANIMAL, IT CAME TO THE NOTICE OF THE PUBLIC WHEN QUEEN VICTORIA, ATTRACTED BY THE GOOD LOOKS AND STERLING QUALITIES OF THE COLLIE, BECAME THE OWNER OF A FINE SPECIMEN.
FOLLOWING THE ROYAL FAVOUR THERE WAS A "BOOM" IN COLLIES, BUT TO THE NEW TYPE OF OWNER LOOKS AND THE ABILITY TO WIN PRIZES ON THE SHOW BENCH WERE MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE ABILITY TO ROUND UP SHEEP. SOME NERVOUS, OVER-BRED DOGS WERE NO DOUBT PRODUCED, BUT IT IS ABSURD TO CONDEMN THE ENTIRE BREED ON THAT ACCOUNT. A BREEDER OF COLLIES FOR OVER 40 YEARS HAS SAID THAT CASES OF TREACHERY WERE UNKNOWN TO HIM. WITH ITS SAGACITY, DEVOTION AND GOOD TEMPER, PLUS RARE GOOD LOOKS, THE COLLIE IS A DOG THAT WILL "DO YOU PROUD", BUT...
...A CITY IS REALLY NO PLACE FOR IT. THE COLLIE BELONGS TO THE MOORS AND HIGHLANDS, WHERE IT IS THE RIGHT-HAND MAN TO THE SHEPHERD, HERDING ITS MASTER'S SHEEP

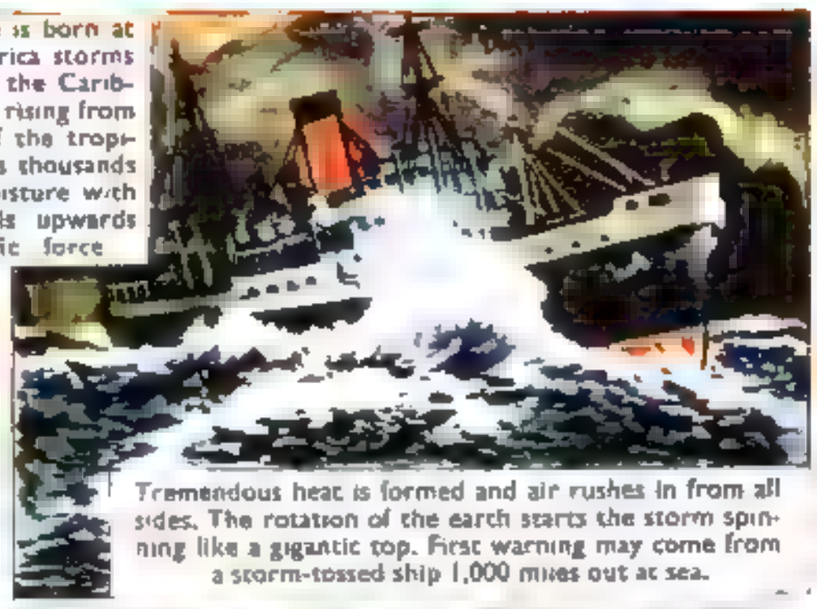
THESE MEN LIVE DANGEROUSLY

Hurricane Trackers



The hurricane is born at sea – in America storms roar in from the Caribbean. Hot air, rising from the surface of the tropical sea, carries thousands of tons of moisture with it and funnels upwards with terrific force

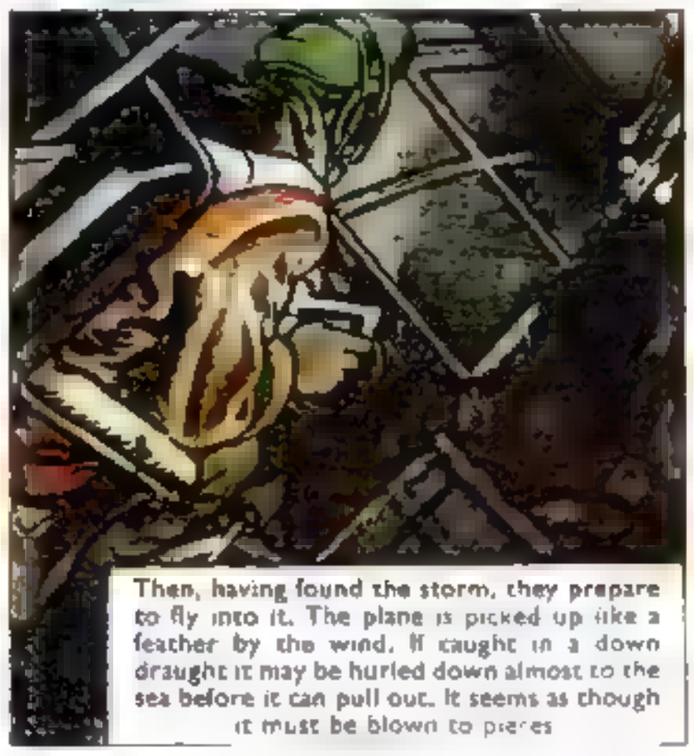
The path of a hurricane is a terrible sight. It can carve a great track of ruin for hundreds of miles, destroying whole towns and taking a grim toll of human life. Disaster, indeed!



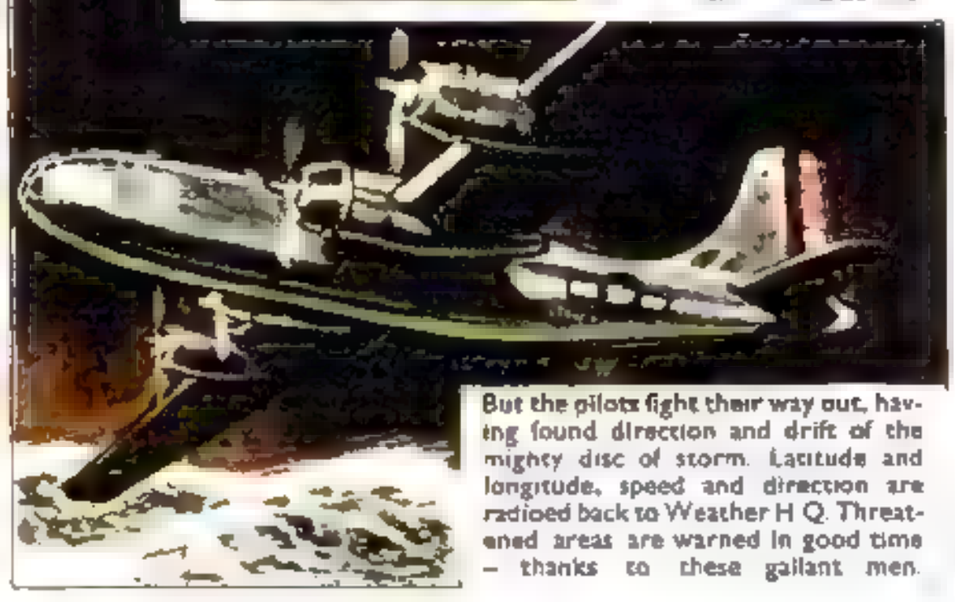
Tremendous heat is formed and air rushes in from all sides. The rotation of the earth starts the storm spinning like a gigantic top. First warning may come from a storm-tossed ship 1,000 miles out at sea.

The news is picked up by special departments of the U.S.A. Navy and Air Force. Their job is to find the storms and then give warning of their approach.

Soon, these airmen are over the sea searching for the centre of the storm. Radar helps locate the great cone of wind, especially at night.



Then, having found the storm, they prepare to fly into it. The plane is picked up like a feather by the wind. If caught in a down draught it may be hurled down almost to the sea before it can pull out. It seems as though it must be blown to pieces



But the pilots fight their way out, having found direction and drift of the mighty disc of storm. Latitude and longitude, speed and direction are radioed back to Weather H.Q. Threatened areas are warned in good time – thanks to these gallant men.

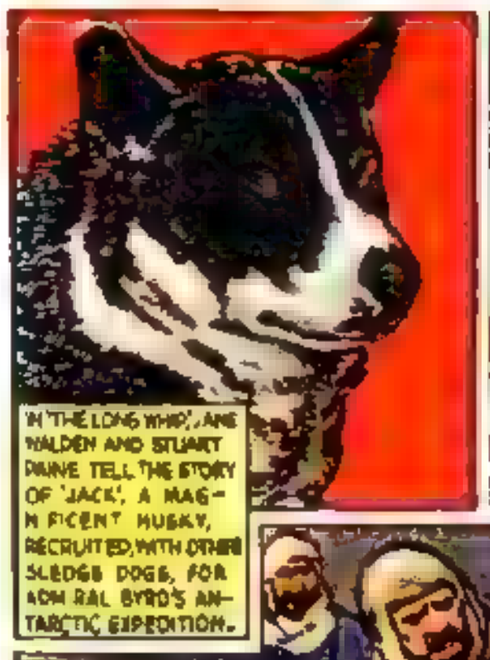
10

In its place we had 'In Her Majesty's Lifetime', a half-page article showing the advances in all kinds of transport during Elizabeth II's lifetime. Art was by Leslie Ashwell Wood.

No half-page coloured articles appeared from 15th May to 11th June as 'Luck of the Legion' took over the full page as *EAGLE*'s centrespread accommodated items pertaining to the forthcoming Coronation of the new Queen.

TRUE DOG STORIES

'JACK', THE HUSKY HERO



IN 'THE LONG WHIP,' ANE WALDEN AND STUART DUNN TELL THE STORY OF 'JACK', A MAGNIFICENT HUSKY, RECRUITED, WITH OTHER SLEDGE DOGS, FOR ADMIRAL BYRD'S ANTARCTIC EXPEDITION.

JACK PROVED HIS WORTH AS THE LEADER OF A SLEDGE TEAM. AT THE CLOSE OF THE SHORT ANTARCTIC SUMMER, A DASH SOUTHWARDS WAS MADE ACROSS THE BARRIER ICE TO ESTABLISH A CHAIN OF STORE DUMPS, AND JACK'S TEAM LED THE SLEDGING PARTY. IN FRONT OF HIM WAS A MAN ON SKIS, THE SURVEYOR, BREAKING TRAIL FOR THE DOG TEAMS.

THE SURVEYOR CRACKED UP WITH AN INJURED KNEE. THIS WAS A FACER FOR WITHOUT HIM IT WAS THOUGHT THAT THE DOGS WOULD ZIG-ZAG HOPELESSLY WHEN CROSSING A FEATURELESS WASTE LIKE THE BARRIER, AND IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO MAKE THEM GO STRAIGHT TO AVOID LOSING VALUABLE TIME.

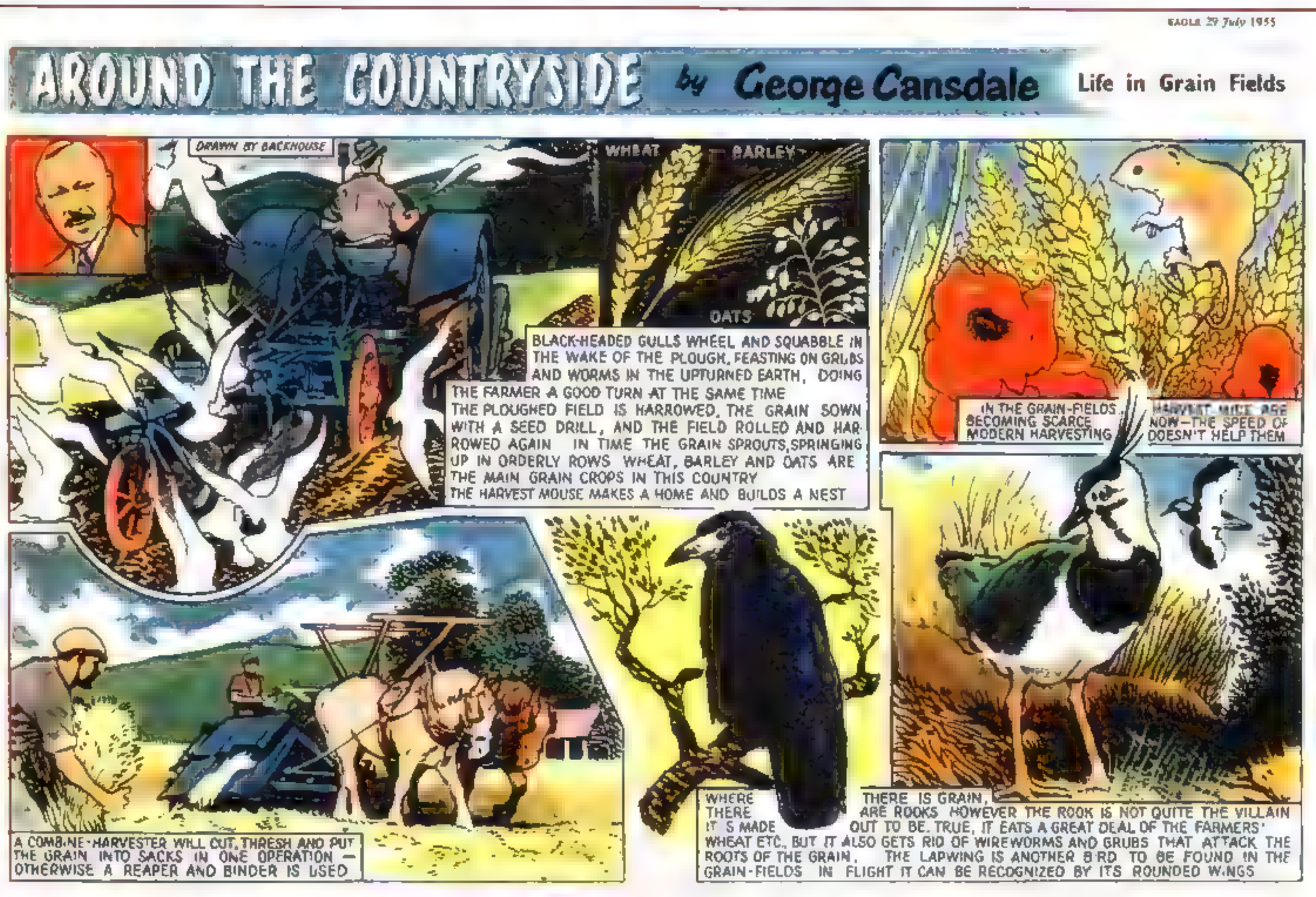
JACK WAS EQUAL TO THE EMERGENCY. HIS DRIVER, THE 'BOSS,' EXPLAINED WHAT WAS WANTED. THE FIRST ATTEMPT WAS A FAILURE. HOWEVER, THE BIG HUSKY GOT THE IDEA IN THE END AND, WHEN PUT ON A COURSE, WENT STRAIGHT FOR THE HORIZON. THANKS TO HIM, THE TREK WAS COMPLETED ON SCHEDULE.

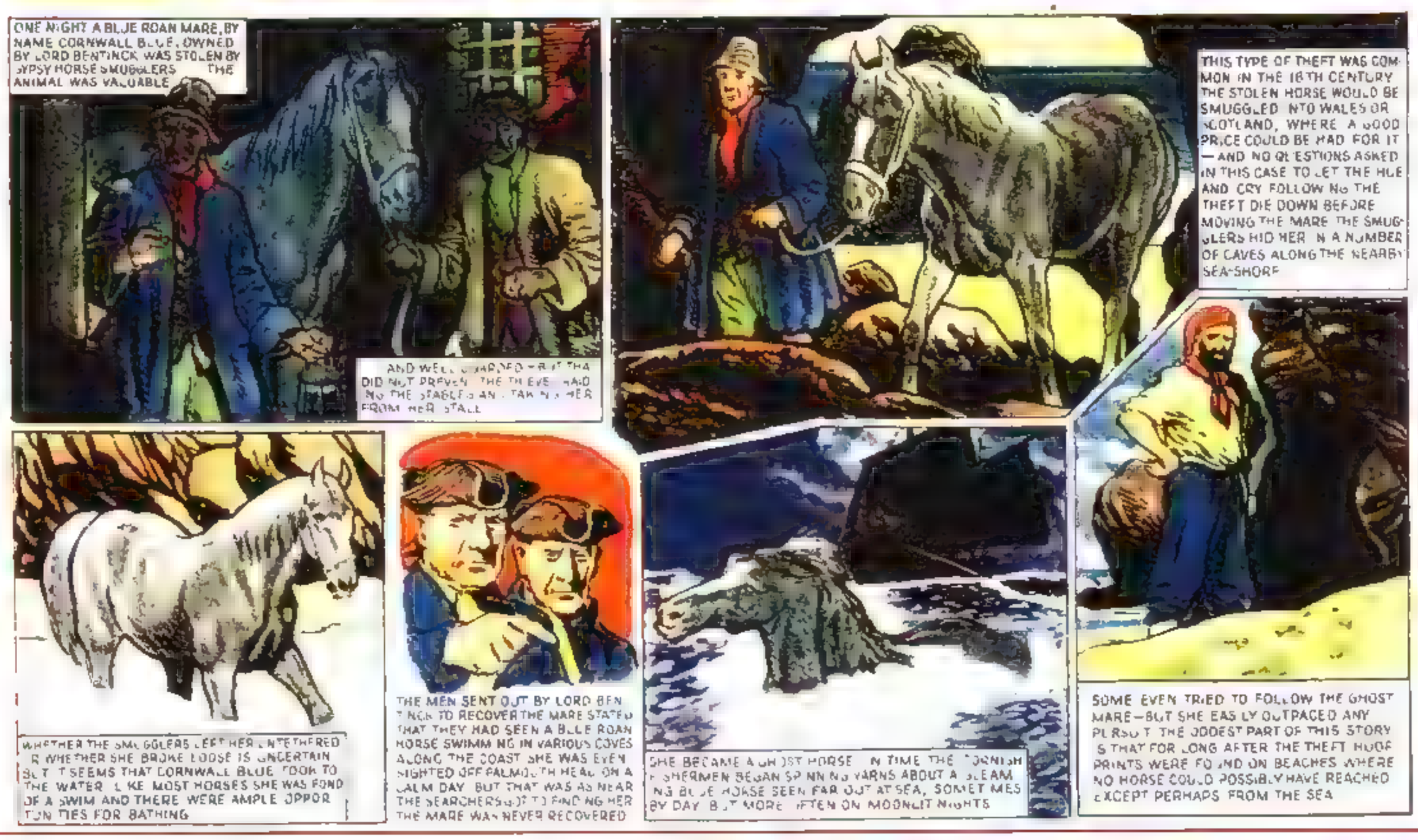
THE RETURN JOURNEY WAS A NIGHTMARE. THEY WERE HALTED BY BLIZZARD AFTER BLIZZARD. THE WIND NEVER LET UP, AND MEN AND DOGS SUFFERED BITTERLY FROM THE AWFUL COLD. STILL JACK BATTLED ON. OWING TO HIS SKILL IN LEADING THE WAY, THE PARTY WERE ABLE TO FIND THE VARIOUS DUMPS AND EVENTUALLY REACHED THE MAIN BASE IN SAFETY.

JACK DID A MAN'S WORK AS WELL AS HIS OWN. HE BROKE TRAIL FOR A SECOND JOURNEY TO THE MOUNTAINS FRINGING THE SOUTHERN SIDE OF THE BARRIER. JACK WAS A HERO DOG AND WAS REWARDED WITH A GOOD HOME IN THE U.S.A., WHERE, AS A HOUSEHOLD PET, HE WAS ABLE TO FORGET THE HARDSHIPS OF THE ANTARCTIC TRAIL.

Look around with George Cansdale
The History of Guinea-Pigs
GUINEA PIGS (OR CAVIES) ARE AMONG OUR FAVOURITE PETS, BUT IN SPITE OF THEIR NAME THEY DO NOT COME FROM WEST AFRICA.
THE WILD CAVY IS A LITTLE, GREYISH ANIMAL WHICH LIVES IN BURROWS IN SANDY COUNTRY NEAR THE COAST OF PERU, IN SOUTH AMERICA. UNLIKE THE TAME KIND, IT HAS ONLY TWO OR THREE BABIES AT A TIME.
DRAWN BY BACKHOUSE
WE DO NOT KNOW WHEN THE FIRST CAVIES BECAME TAME AND DOMESTICATED, BUT IT WAS WELL OVER 500 YEARS AGO. WHEN THE SPANIARDS ARRIVED IN PERU, THE INCA PRIESTS WERE ALREADY KEEPING GUINEA-PIGS AS PETS.
IT MAY HAVE BEEN SOME TIME IN THE 17th CENTURY WHEN THE FIRST GUINEA-PIGS WERE BROUGHT OVER TO EUROPE, PERHAPS BY SPANISH SAILORS.
AS FAR AS IS KNOWN, IT WAS IN THE REIGN OF GEORGE II THAT THE VERY FIRST GUINEA-PIGS ARRIVED IN ENGLAND. THEY WERE GREAT NOVELTIES AND WERE KEPT AS PETS.
GUINEA PIGS BECAME VERY POPULAR, AND THEY WERE FOUND VERY USEFUL AS LABORATORY ANIMALS. WITH MANY DIFFERENT COLOURS AND THREE DIFFERENT KINDS OF HAIR (SMOOTH, ROUGH AND LONG) GUINEA PIGS MADE GOOD SUBJECTS FOR BREEDING EXPERIMENTS. THEIR LITTER GRADUALLY BECAME BIGGER, WITH SIX OR EIGHT YOUNG AT A TIME
NEXT WEEK, I SHALL TELL YOU HOW TO LOOK AFTER YOUR GUINEA-PIG

Backhouse was back on 19th June with a strip called 'It Isn't True'. This series explored many half-truths and myths although some of them were as I found them from personal life. 'That Collies are Treacherous' - I have known several collie dogs during my farming days and found them ideal dogs as workers or companions. This series finished on 18th September and was followed by a new strip from George the following week called 'These Men Live Dangerously'.


EAGLE 29 July 1955
AROUND THE COUNTRYSIDE by George Cansdale
Life in Grain Fields
DRAWN BY BACKHOUSE
WHEAT
BARLEY
OATS
BLACK-HEADED GULLS WHEEL AND SQUABBLE IN THE WAKE OF THE PLOUGH, FEASTING ON GRUBS AND WORMS IN THE UPTURNED EARTH, DOING THE FARMER A GOOD TURN AT THE SAME TIME
THE PLOUGHED FIELD IS HARROWED, THE GRAIN SOWN WITH A SEED DRILL, AND THE FIELD ROLLED AND HARROWED AGAIN. IN TIME THE GRAIN SPROUTS, SPRINGING UP IN ORDERLY ROWS. WHEAT, BARLEY AND OATS ARE THE MAIN GRAIN CROPS IN THIS COUNTRY
THE HARVEST MOUSE MAKES A HOME AND BUILDS A NEST
IN THE GRAIN-FIELDS BECOMING SCARCE MODERN HARVESTING
HARVEST MICE ARE NOW—THE SPEED OF DOESN'T HELP THEM
A COMBINE-HARVESTER WILL CUT, THRESH AND PUT THE GRAIN INTO SACKS IN ONE OPERATION — OTHERWISE A REAPER AND BINDER IS USED
WHERE THERE IT'S MADE
THERE IS GRAIN, ARE ROOKS. HOWEVER THE ROOK IS NOT QUITE THE VILLAIN OUT TO BE. TRUE, IT EATS A GREAT DEAL OF THE FARMERS' WHEAT ETC., BUT IT ALSO GETS RID OF WIREWORMS AND GRUBS THAT ATTACK THE ROOTS OF THE GRAIN. THE LAPWING IS ANOTHER BIRD TO BE FOUND IN THE GRAIN-FIELDS. IN FLIGHT IT CAN BE RECOGNIZED BY ITS ROUNDED WINGS

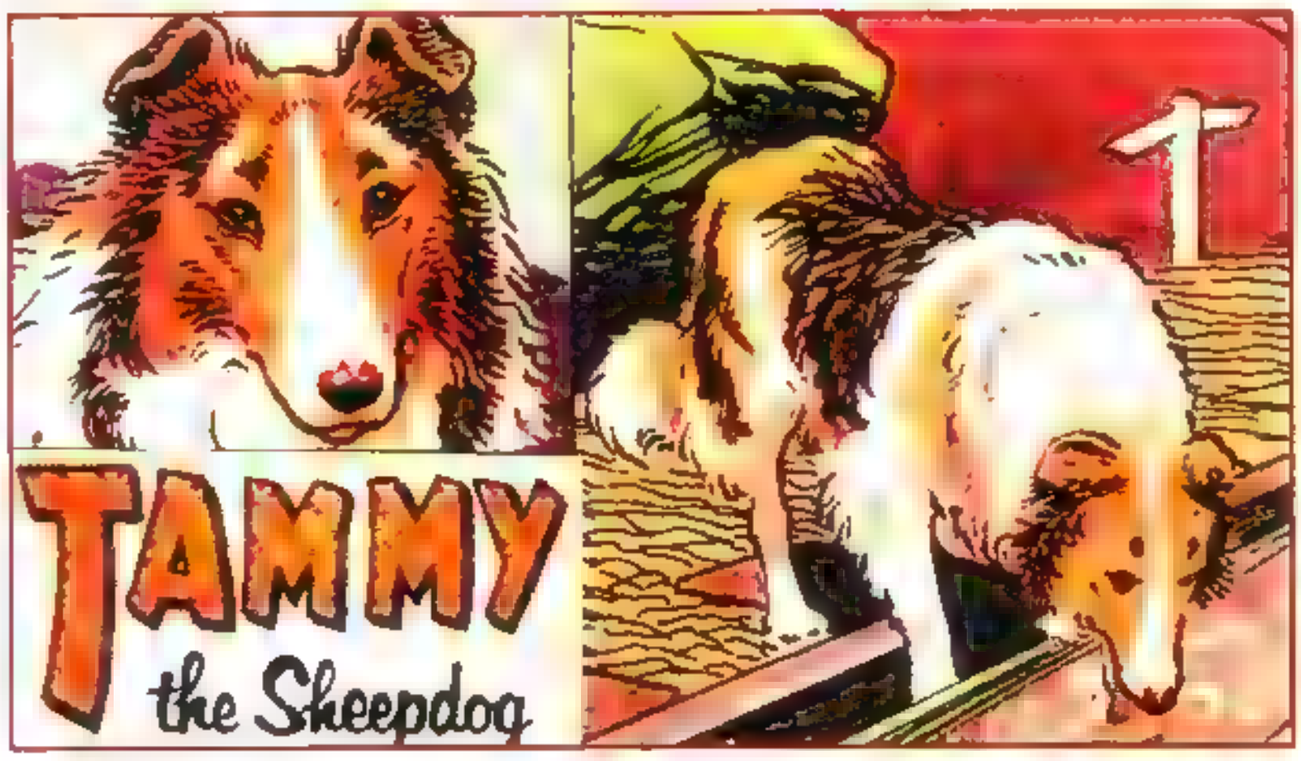

FAMOUS HORSE STORIES
Cornwall Blue
ONE NIGHT A BLUE ROAN MARE, BY NAME CORNWALL BLUE, OWNED BY LORD BENTINCK WAS STOLEN BY GYPSY HORSE SMUGGLERS THE ANIMAL WAS VALUABLE
AND WELL GUARDED — BUT THAT DID NOT PREVENT THE THIEVES AND THE STABLE-MAN TAKING HER FROM HER STALL
THIS TYPE OF THEFT WAS COMMON IN THE 18TH CENTURY THE STOLEN HORSE WOULD BE SMUGGLED INTO WALES OR SCOTLAND, WHERE A GOOD PRICE COULD BE HAD FOR IT — AND NO QUESTIONS ASKED IN THIS CASE TO LET THE HUE AND CRY FOLLOW ON THE THEFT DIE DOWN BEFORE MOVING THE MARE THE SMUGGLERS HID HER IN A NUMBER OF CAVES ALONG THE NEARBY SEA-SHORE
WHETHER THE SMUGGLERS LEFT HER UNTETHERED OR WHETHER SHE BROKE LOOSE IS UNCERTAIN BUT IT SEEMS THAT CORNWALL BLUE TOOK TO THE WATER LIKE MOST HORSES SHE WAS FOND OF A SWIM AND THERE WERE AMPLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR BATHING
THE MEN SENT OUT BY LORD BENTINCK TO RECOVER THE MARE STATED THAT THEY HAD SEEN A BLUE ROAN HORSE SWIMMING IN VARIOUS COVES ALONG THE COAST SHE WAS EVEN SIGHTED OFF PALMOUTH HEAD ON A CALM DAY BUT THAT WAS AS NEAR THE SEARCHERS GOT TO FINDING HER THE MARE WAS NEVER RECOVERED
SHE BECAME A GHOST HORSE IN TIME THE CORNISH FISHERMEN BEGAN SPINNING YARNS ABOUT A GLEAMING BLUE HORSE SEEN FAR OUT AT SEA, SOMETIMES BY DAY BUT MORE OFTEN ON MOONLIT NIGHTS
SOME EVEN TRIED TO FOLLOW THE GHOST MARE—BUT SHE EASILY OUTPACED ANY PURSUIT THE ODDEST PART OF THIS STORY IS THAT FOR LONG AFTER THE THEFT HOOF PRINTS WERE FOUND ON BEACHES WHERE NO HORSE COULD POSSIBLY HAVE REACHED EXCEPT PERHAPS FROM THE SEA

This series covered many dangerous careers that some men have, from hurricane trackers to men who extract snake venom from snakes.

On 22nd January, 1954, George was more at home with a new series 'True Dog Stories' telling the stories of famous dogs such as Greyfriars Bobby and the dog Bacchus on a wartime submarine *Rubis* that included *EAGLE*'s contributor Ruari McLean as a crew member. The series was not completed by George and we didn't see his work again until the first 'George Cansdale' strip appeared illustrated by him. This series was called 'Look around with George Cansdale' and started on 28th May. It was to be the first strip for which Backhouse had a credit.

On 6th August, 1954, a new series started on *EAGLE*'s page 10. It was 'Famous Horse Stories' and this series was shared by George and other artists. From my priced-up bound edition of *EAGLE* I see that George was paid 21 guineas for the artwork. Half-way through this series he stopped drawing it and artists such as Frank Humphris, Bellavitis (both uncredited) drew the strip, but Raymond Sheppard, who drew quite a lot of them, was credited. George scripted them and received 5 guineas for it.

After twelve months of 'Look Around' Cansdale started a new series called 'Around



the Countryside', George illustrating, but the series was not a lot different from the 'Look Around' series.

On 16th September 1955, George did his final 'Cansdale' strip, 'British Parks', and from then on it would be Tom Adams who would draw the 'Cansdale' strips (see *Eagle Times* Vol. 22, No. 2).

In 1956, George found work with Hulton's *Swift*, illustrating 'Tammy the Sheepdog' in the centre spread. George would share the centrespread with Tom Adams: George drawing 'Tammy' and Tom drawing 'Looking at Things'. After Hulton, George moved on to *Look and Learn* and *Treasure*.

He lived at 16, Upper Tollington Park, London, and died on 1st August 1978.

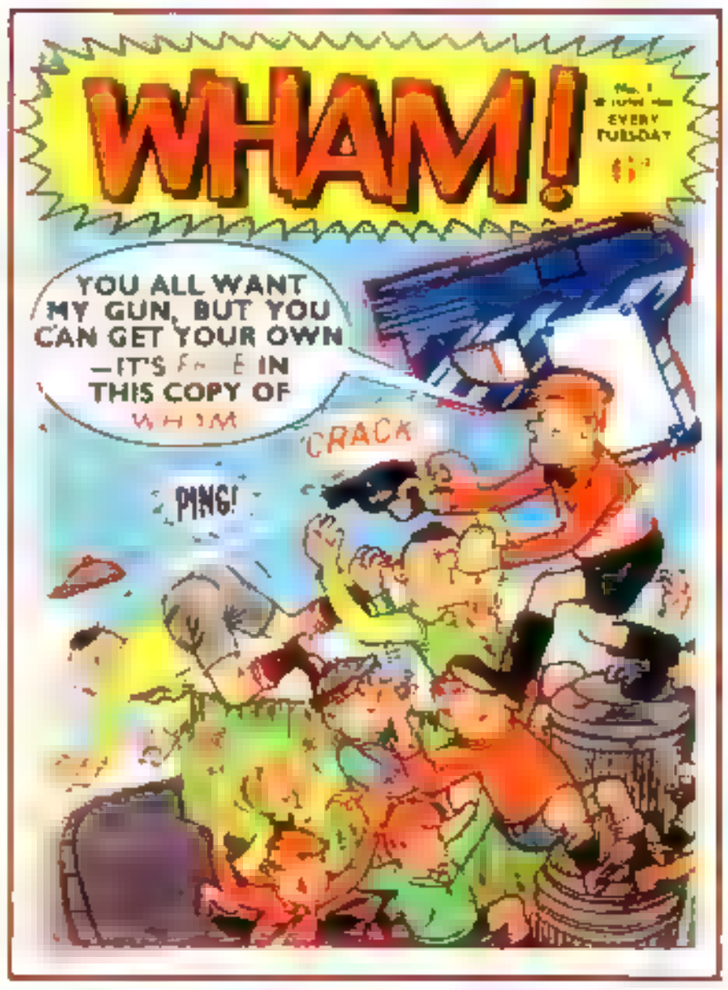
Many thanks to Steve Holland for help with this article.

DANNY DARE

. . He's Dan Dare's Number One Fan!

by Jeremy Briggs

In 2008, for only the third time since 1950, there were two new versions of 'Dan Dare' being published at the same time, the 1950s-styled Dan in Rod Barzilay's *Spaceship Away* and the latest version of Dan updated by Garth Ennis and published by Virgin Comics. Before that, bar annuals, the last time that there were two different non-reprint 'Dan Dare' stories running at the same time in different publications was in 1990, when 'Dan Dare' was in new *Eagle* and 'Dare' was in *Revolver*. Before that you have to go back to 1964 when the character appeared both in original *EAGLE* and in the *Sunday People* newspaper.



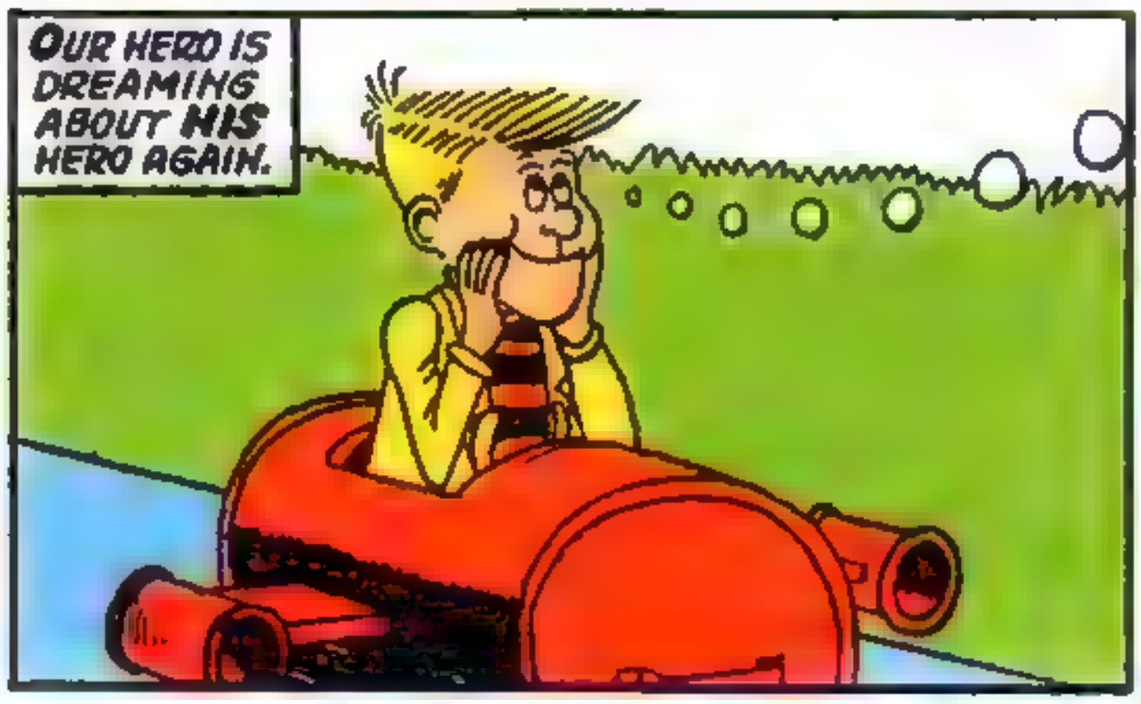
The first Wham! issue

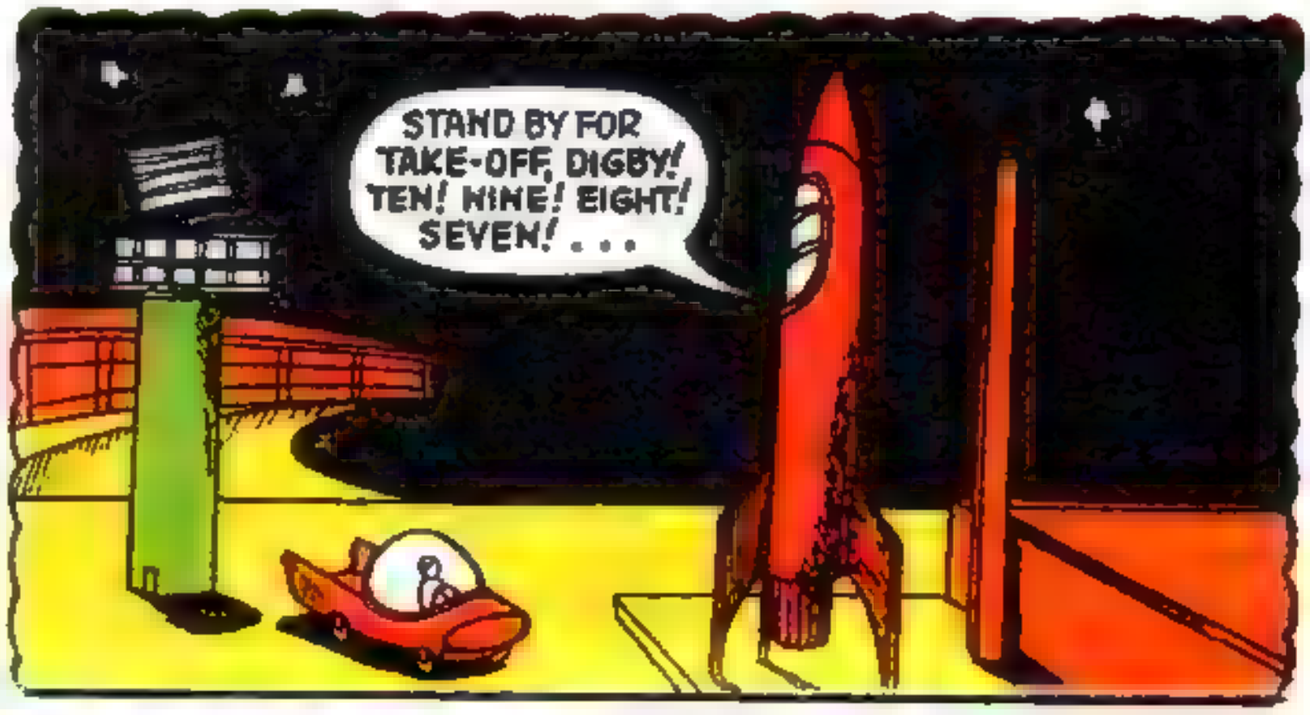
DAN DARE KNEW THAT THE VERON HAD ABOUT TO MAKE HIS FIRST TRUE BUT TINY—WHERE FROM? SOME TENSION-LADEN QUESTIONS WERE SOON TO BE ANSWERED
PRESIDENT SONDAR MANY TREENS ARE LEAVING THEIR WORK AND RUNNING TOWARDS THE LAKE - THEY NO LONGER OBEY ORDERS
THE TREENS ARE IN REVOLT!
Follow the hilarious adventures of Danny Dare every week in WHAM! Britain's latest and greatest fun paper!

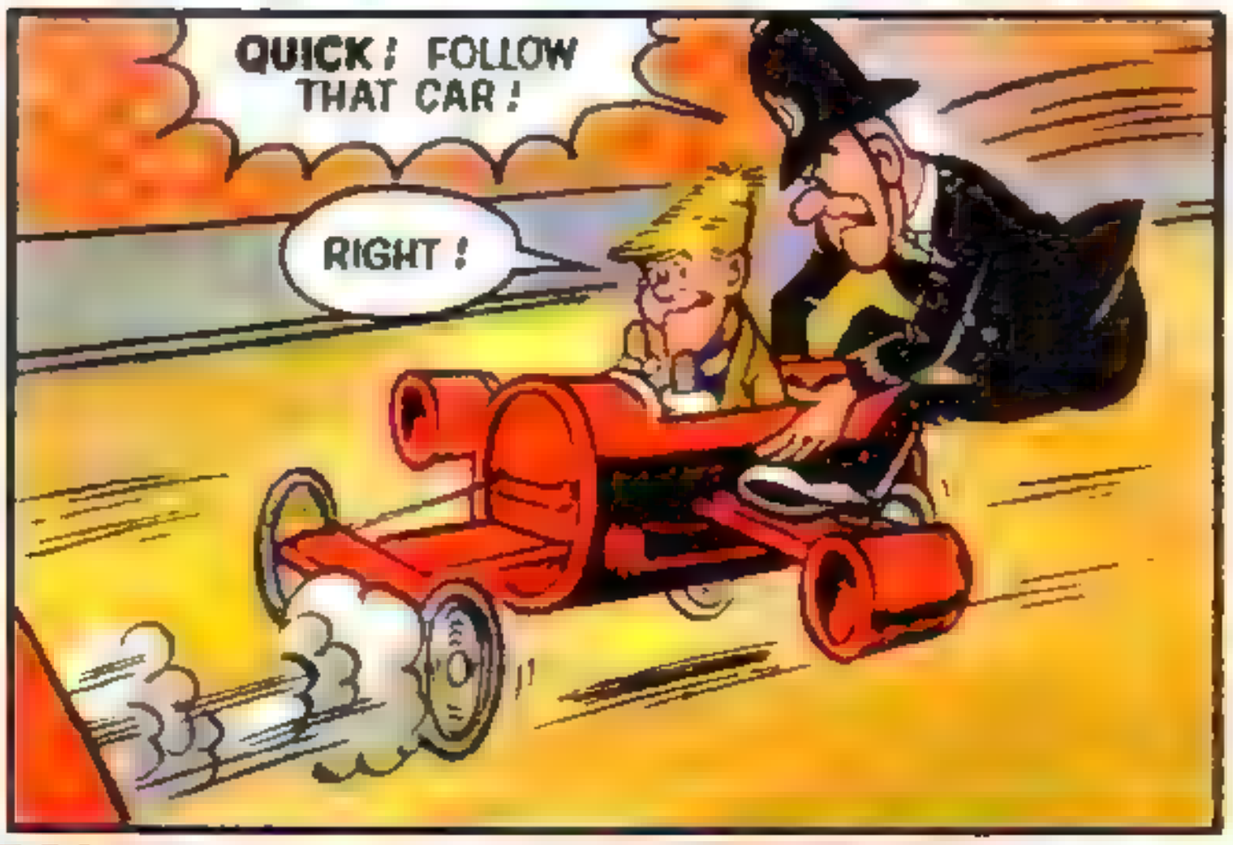
A mention in EAGLE

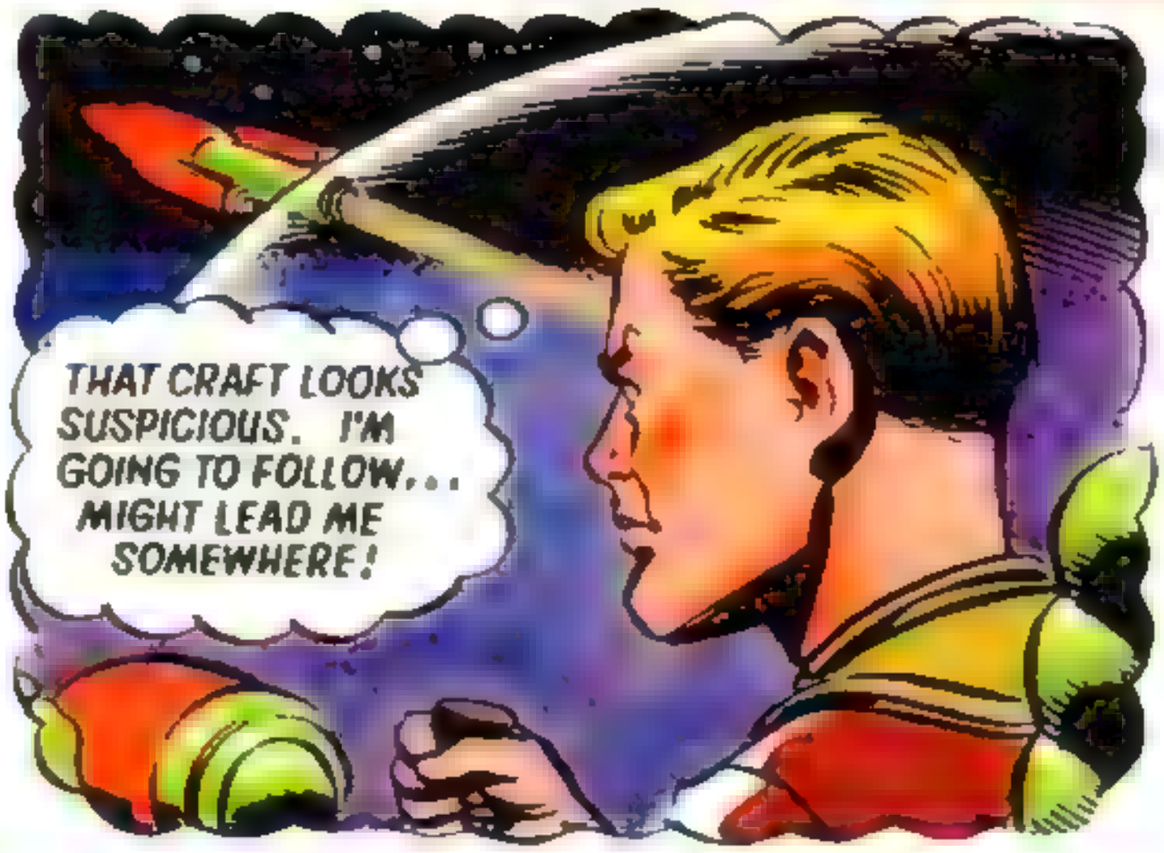
The *EAGLE* story at that time was 'All Treens Must Die!' with art by Keith Watson, while over in *The Sunday People* Don Harley was the artist on 'Mission To The Stars'. Yet at the same time that Dan Dare was appearing in those two strips he was also making regular guest appearances in another weekly strip. The humour comic *Wham!* published a strip with artwork by *EAGLE* artists Bruce Cornwell and Don Harley, amongst others, a strip that has never been reprinted – 'Danny Dare'.

Below: Colour frames from Wham! Annuals



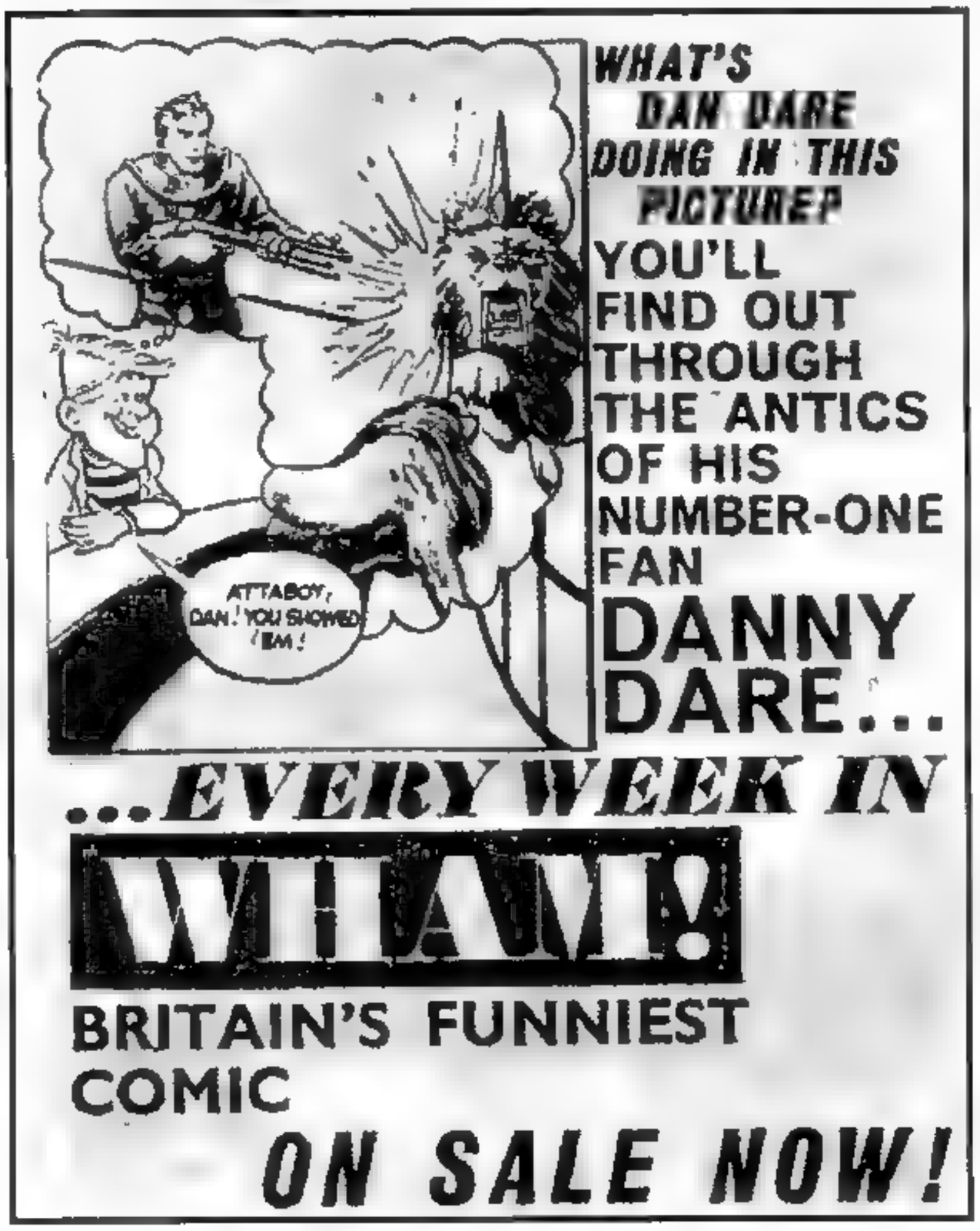




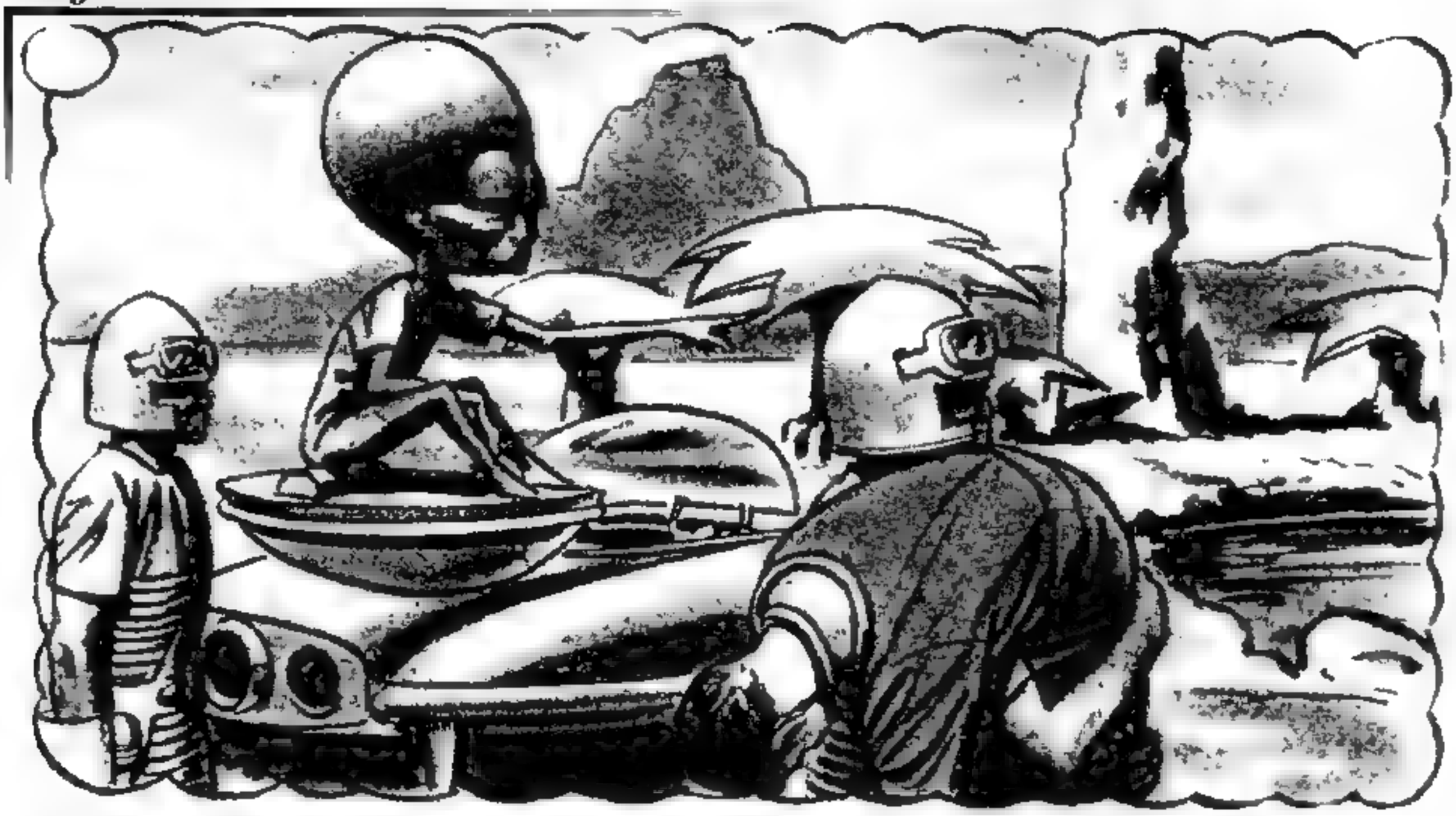


Danny Dare was "Dan Dare's number one fan" who day-dreamed about his hero as he went about his daily routine of school and play. Danny would use Dan's inspiration to get him out of, and sometimes into, scrapes. The strip was conceived as two pages of black and white artwork telling a complete story each week. The 'Danny Dare' sections were done in a typical humour art style and the 'Dan Dare' sections in a more typical adventure style, often with a black and white wash. The initial artwork was by humour artist Leo Baxendale.

Wham! was the comic that lured Leo Baxendale away from DC Thomson for whom he had created such *Beano* favourites 'The Bash Street Kids', 'Little Plum' and 'Minnie The Minx'. Dissatisfied with Thomson's, Baxendale moved to Odhams in 1964 with the lure of more money and of effectively creating a new humour comic, a super-*Beano*, in the shape of *Wham!*, which launched with a cover date of 20th June, 1964. This was the same cover date as *EAGLE* Volume 15 Number 30, which printed the eighth part of 'All Treens Must Die!' *Wham!* and the 'Danny Dare' strip was promoted in *EAGLE* with illustrated adverts and a tag line at the end of the 'Dan Dare' strip of "Follow the hilarious adventures of Danny Dare each week in WHAM! – Britain's latest and greatest fun paper". While this tag line did not last long in *EAGLE*, the tag at the end of the 'Danny Dare' strip's "Dan Dare fans follow his adventures in Eagle – on sale now", or an equivalent, invariably appeared at the bottom of most strips.


ATTABOY, DAN! YOU SHOWED 'EM!
WHAT'S DAN DARE DOING IN THIS PICTURE?
YOU'LL FIND OUT THROUGH THE ANTICS OF HIS NUMBER-ONE FAN
DANNY DARE...
...EVERY WEEK IN
WHAM!
BRITAIN'S FUNNIEST COMIC
ON SALE NOW!

For that first issue of *Wham!* Baxendale provided the artwork for ten of the title's twelve comic strips - 'General Nitt and His Barmy Army', 'The Wacks', 'The Tiddlers', 'Eagle-Eye Junior Spy', 'Biff', 'The Humbugs', 'The Pest Of The West', 'Georgie's Germs' and 'Footsie The Clown' as well as for 'Danny Dare'. Indeed the only strips he did not draw were the adventure strip 'Kelpie The Boy Wizard' by John M Burns, who would go on to draw 'Dan Dare' in new *Eagle*, and 'Billy Binns and his Wonderful Specs' which was a more realistic adventure/humour strip with art by Bill Mainwaring. This mammoth amount of strips illustrated by Baxendale in issue 1 could not be maintained and he did only two more 'Danny Dare' strips, in issues 4 and 8, and signed all three of them. While it would appear that Baxendale did his own adventure art for his daydream sequences, when regular humour artist Artie Jackson took over, original 'Dan Dare' artist Bruce Cornwell was brought in to do the adventure sequences with a few episodes covered by Don Harley. The story writing was initially by Leo Baxendale but was then



passed over to Artie Jackson and finally to Walter Thorburn.

The 'Dan Dare' sections in 'Danny Dare' often reflected elements of the *EAGLE* stories, mainly from the year before the launch of *Wham!* Danny had a home-made pedal-powered go-cart which he imagined was his spaceship and in early episodes it was named after Dan's time ship from 'Operation Time Trap', *Tempus Frangit*. Also from 'Operation Time Trap' came Xel, the Stollite leader who normally appeared when Danny needed to imagine an enemy for Dan. *Tempus Frangit* was name-checked in *Wham* issue 1, while the Stollites first appeared in issue 4 and Xel himself in issue 5. Dan, of course appeared in most issues while Digby also put in some appearances, being name-checked in issue 1 and first appearing in issue 2. By issue 10 the generic Stollite soldiers appearing in the background had become Treens although they were still commanded by Xel.

Surprisingly Xel remained as the main villain with the Mekon putting in only a single appearance in issue 15, dated 26th September 1964. In this issue he is not referred to by name, just as Dan's enemy. Since the Dan art in this issue was not by the regular artist Bruce Cornwell but by Don Harley, it is tempting to assume that he was acting as holiday or sickness cover and drew who he considered to be Dan's enemy. When asked about this recently Don Harley confirmed that the art for that issue was indeed his but that, after four decades, he had no recollection of doing any 'Danny Dare' strips.

After references to the *Tempus Frangit* were quietly dropped, the various ships that Dan flew in the strip tended to be generic spaceships or flying cars, although normally incorporating Bruce Cornwell's typically impressive technical detail. Despite being Dan's regular mount in *EAGLE* during 1964 it would be issue 33 in January 1965 before *Anastasia* made an appearance in 'Danny Dare', again in art by Don Harley. Harley would also draw *Anastasia* in the 'Danny Dare' strip in the first *Wham! Annual* cover, dated 1966. In this annual both the 'Danny Dare' strips were in colour and lasted four pages each. In later episodes of the weekly comic, Artie Jackson provided both the 'Dan' and 'Danny' art and the 'Dan Dare' spaceships again became more generic and humorous designs bearing little or no relation to the designs in the *EAGLE* strip.

Wham! began in 1964 as an impressive comic with colour photogravure front and back covers

QUICK THINKING THAT, LAD! YOU'VE SAVED OUR TAKINGS! WHAT CAN THE SUPERMARKET DO FOR YOU?
A LARGE TIN OF BAKED BEANS, PLEASE!
O.K., DESPATCHER, NOW THAT LOT ARE OUT OF HARM'S WAY, LET'S GET THESE SUPPLIES LOADED!

with school-boy 'Biff' on the front and 'Footsie The Clown' on the back, while the centrespread was similarly colourful with 'Eagle-Eye Junior Spy', all for the cover price of 6d. Indeed the idea of having two different artists working on 'Danny Dare' would have been expensive from both a financial and a time point of view. The strip continued at two pages until issue 42, dated 3rd April 1965, when it was reduced to a single page.

Danny was one of the victims of the cost cutting that went on in the title at that time but luckily survived what was to come. Issue 43 had the normal twenty-four pages for 6d with 'Biff' and 'Eagle-Eye' in colour in their usual positions but by then the back cover was the domain of caveboy 'Glugg'. One week later the price had gone up to 7d, the page count had come down to twenty and only the cover was still in colour. Indeed it is obvious that issue 44's 'Eagle-Eye' and 'Glugg', while being printed in black and white, had been created for colour printing, which suggests that the cost-cutting exercise was a hasty one.

As with the 'Danny Dare' strip, *Wham!* itself lost some of its polish as it went along with Baxendale doing less and less art, and his last issue was number 96. By issue 100 in May 1966 the photogravure colour cover had been replaced with simple yellow, red and blue colours, while by issue 150 in April 1967 the title was reprinting American Marvel strips in black and white with 'The Fantastic Four' taking up a quarter of that issue. Despite this, 'Danny Dare' remained in the title, albeit sometimes at only half a page, until its final issue - number 187 dated 13th January 1968 – only missing ten odd issues along the way. It was an impressive achievement for the humour strip, outlasting its mother strip in *EAGLE* which had gone to reprint with Volume 18 Number 2 almost exactly one year beforehand.

With the modern copyright minefield being what it is and the fact that the strips use some characters that belong to the Dan Dare Corporation and others that belong to IPC Media, there is little hope of an official reprinting. Today the strips are amusing diversions, with some interesting due to their artists, but with the majority not really worth the effort. That said it is still a part of 'Dan Dare' history that deserves to be better remembered. ❑

AND, IN HIS IMAGINATION, DANNY SEES A GIANT VACUUM WEAPON IN ACTION AGAINST HIS HEROES...
IT'S NO GOOD FIGHTING AGAINST IT, DIGBY... WE'RE BEING SUCKED TOWARDS THAT SHIP!
DAN! WHAT'S HAPPENIN' TO US!

What's in a name?

Alan Vince takes a look at the career of multi-talented

Gerry Embleton

It was during a quiet period at Comicon in London when I was approached by a young comic fan, fondly holding some recent purchases. For some reason he had sought me out and asked for my help in identifying some artists' work. The first strip was easy to credit, a line and wash effort by the great Harry Bishop. The next strip, the young enthusiast thought was by a "young Ron Embleton". While it was easy to see why he thought that I had to tell him it was, in fact, by Ron's younger brother Gerry. So not a young Ron but a younger Embleton. Having been told the differences in their similar styles the young fan went away, I hope, much wiser!

Gerry Embleton was born in June 1941 in Edgware, Middlesex, the youngest of three brothers. Of his two older brothers Ron, the eldest, was to have a big influence on him in his formative years, Terry, the middle Embleton son, has never followed an artistic career. The family home was originally in Bow but, due to Hitler's Luftwaffe, their mother moved the boys to Middlesex and it was there that Gerry first saw the world. He has never forgiven those bombers for robbing him of his Cockney birthright.

As a child Gerry loved everything military and could be seen drawing on any surface available,

Enjoying a drink:

L to R: Pat Kelleher, Don Lawrence, Peter Jackson, Gerry Embleton, Ron Embleton, John Smith
Centre front: Richard Hook

Gerry Embleton works on a figure of powder-horn maker and company clerk John Bush, an African American soldier from Massachusetts who was captured at the fall of Fort William Henry and died in captivity

including the family dog. Eleven years his senior Ron Embleton was to encourage his little brother and allowed him to look over his shoulder as he worked. Gerry also praised his parents for passing down a more than normal ration of energy and enthusiasm – reflected in both Gerry and Ron's output over the coming years. With both boys, drawing and painting seemed to be in the blood and there was never any doubt in their minds as to what career to follow.

When Ron returned from Army service during the Malayan emergency and took up a professional art career Gerry was soon "pressed into service" as a studio helper. At the young age of ten he began to shade-in backgrounds and learn the basics from Ron. One might say what better teacher could you wish for? Gerry has happy memories of the 1950s and recalls that it was a great time for all the emerging strip artists. "You could write and illustrate two to eight pages and sell them. I had my first illustration published when I was only 14 in *Mickey Mouse* comic. Comics opened and closed on a regular basis but *EAGLE* was something special and I can remember rushing out and buying it - it was real quality." A year older, at 15, Gerry had his comic strip pages published – the first of many in the years to come.

Burning with enthusiasm and the worst case of overconfidence since George A. Custer Gerry turned down the chance of going to art school full time and left school at 15 to set about earning a living. He did, however, attend life classes, which he never regretted. Gerry always felt that many art students in more recent years have been betrayed by the system by simply not being taught to draw. He has seen many examples where artists have no basic training in anatomy and technique. While, as a child, Gerry did enjoy the *Dandy* and *Beano* he was always drawn to those publications that had historical adventure stories and strips or fact-based series. When his brother worked on the long-running 'Wulf the Briton' for *Express Weekly* Gerry would often help with colouring and sometimes painted in the background trees, grass and decorations on armaments and clothes.

In the years 1957 to 1963 Gerry almost literally submerged himself in comic strips, historical illustrations for educational magazines and fairy tale

illustrations - the latter being another passion for him. In common with many of the artists working at the time Gerry found that working on strips, often with strict deadlines, gave him a growing fluency and confidence. The constant problems of composition and economy peculiar to that type of drawing gave him a good grounding. One of his strong points was his desire to get things accurate in terms of dress and weapons, unlike many other (underpaid) artists of those times.

It was only natural that Gerry often followed brother Ron on strips that the latter had first illustrated. Looking at some of those very early strips it can be fully appreciated, with hindsight, that both Embleton brothers had that ability to create more atmosphere in their drawings than the other fledgling artists who contributed to those early comics. While Ron Embleton preferred to use a brush for most of his main line work, Gerry found it easier to use a pen, often working with wash and then moving on to coloured inks, conte crayon and wash and gouache. It was one big learning curve for Gerry and he never stopped experimenting with all kinds of art materials.

After his initial work with Ron on 'Wulf the Briton' Gerry followed his brother and worked on such strips as 'Lore of the West' for *Lone Star* comics, 'Stingray' for *TV21* and 'Col. Pinto' for *Express Weekly Annual* (1962). Gerry had also illustrated *Fireball XL5 Annuals* in 1963/64 along with other well known *EAGLE* artists like Eric Eden.

Two other publications, which saw many of the artists who had contributed to *EAGLE* and *Express Weekly* find new outlets, were *Look and Learn* and *Once Upon A Time*. The contrast from those early black and white comic books put out by *Western Super Thriller* and *Cowboy Comics Library* could not be greater.

Both *Look and Learn* and *Once Upon a Time* gave the artist real scope with full colour spreads. With *Look and Learn* Gerry had a chance to illustrate historical events and put to good use his knowledge of period dress and uniforms. *Once Upon a Time* was a full colour magazine which contained both strips and text stories and used the talents of both Embleton brothers, Don Lawrence, Richard Hook and Angus McBride. While basically a fairy story publication, *Once upon a Time* also encouraged the appreciation of great paintings and love of animals. Both these magazines had long runs and contained outstanding art. From 1963 to 1965 Gerry lived and worked in Brighton and admits that this was a very creative period for him personally. Although he did little military work he did divide his time between life classes at the prestigious Brighton College of Art, going for long walks over the South Downs and producing remarkable free landscapes in oils. Many of

Historical drawing

these Paintings were exhibited at an international level (USA, Switzerland, Canada etc.).

Upon his return to London Gerry saw his first issue of a magazine called *Tradition* and decided to make an approach to them as a possible outlet for his military paintings. It took a year to summon up the courage to walk into the editorial offices of *Tradition* and show some sample paintings to a certain Col. Nicholson. Happily this first meeting began a series of commissions on a regular basis for Gerry.

Those commissions for *Tradition* brought Gerry into contact with fellow enthusiasts and he began to build up a serious collection of references and a circle of important contacts. His time at *Tradition* was immensely valuable and brought him into contact with the masters of earlier generations: he has always been a great admirer of Anton Hoffman, Menzel, Detaille, de Neuville and the great monochrome illustrators of the late 19th century. Gerry also had admiration for painters like Goya, Velasquez, Hogarth and Andrew Wyeth. All this fed Gerry's hunger to achieve not just accuracy in his work but a quality of humanity – painting real human beings.

It was Gerry's work in tradition that attracted the attention, in 1970, of Martin Windrow who was looking for an artist to illustrate a book he was editing for Guinness Superlatives. This book, *The Universal Soldier*, gave Gerry a chance for the first time to work slowly and carefully with some of the greatest living experts on military costume in the preparation of a series of important colour plates combining accuracy with a "feel" for the differing periods. Gerry even got the chance to actually wear armour and chain mail and handle different fire arms. He would photograph and draw from life where possible and put in many long

THE DRAMATIC STORY OF A MAN WHO COLLECTS . . . TROUBLE!
CATCH OR KILL
Professor Grant, believed to have found the secret of speeding animal growth, has disappeared in the Sargasso Sea. Craig and Kipper set out to investigate, flying via Chicago. But, en route
DON'T MOVE A MUSCLE KIPPER!
HOLD YOUR BREATH. I'M GOING TO USE THE GAS GUN!
PHEW! THANKS!
SOMEONE'S OUT TO GET RID OF US, AND MY GUESS IS THAT IT'S BROSSER.
THE MAN WHO BROKE INTO OUR ZOO! BUT WE LEFT HIM IN HOSPITAL WITH SHOCK
COULD HAVE BEEN FAKED. WE'LL SEE WHAT HIS EMPLOYERS IN CHICAGO CAN TELL US
INTER-SPACE TRAVEL, INC, CHICAGO
IST INC
THIS IS THE PLACE THAT WAS ON HIS IDENTICARD. THE BOSS IS A GUY CALLED ZALT.
ZALT A DANGEROUS CRIMINAL, IS EVASIVE
BROSSER? NEVER HEARD OF HIM. YOUR INTRUDER MUST HAVE USED A FORGED IDENTICARD.
IN THAT CASE, MR. ZALT I'M SORRY TO HAVE BOTHERED YOU...
I'M SURE HE WAS LYING, CRAG
ME TOO. BUT WE CAN PROVE NOTHING. WE'LL JUST HAVE TO WATCH OURSELVES.
3
WE'D BETTER GO TO PROFESSOR GRANT RIGHT AWAY...
14
TV CENTURY 21 APRIL 15, 2067

hours researching every aspect of the work. Gerry went on to work with Martin on many books and articles during the 1970s for such publishers as Ian Allan Ltd., *Men-at-Arms*, modelling books and articles for Airfix and articles for *Military Modelling and Battle*. Gerry also continued to illustrate for encyclopedias, advertising work and fairy tale books.

At this time Gerry undertook a number of paintings on American Revolutionary subjects and completed over thirty of these. While they were never published together they were purchased by the Canadian National Park Service and have been widely published. Another significant commission came from London *Sunday Times* Bicentennial Exhibition at the Royal Maritime Museum at

RIDERS OF THE RANGE
Jeff Arnold in
Last of the Fighting Cheyenne
After a battle outside Indian Territory Little Wolf and his Cheyenne Indians escape northward across the plains of Kansas. Jeff Arnold and Luke Hanlon, an Army contingent sent to bring the rebels back by force, are also pursuing Little Wolf but have not been overtaken. At last through sheer exhaustion the Captain is forced to let his soldiers rest. He sends Jeff and Luke ahead of the force to warn Fort Dodge of the Indians' approach and, while on their way, the two riders see a burned-out ranch-house
JUST AS FEARED — LITTLE WOLF'S WARRIORS HAVE RAIDED THIS PLACE. LET'S TAKE A LOOK AROUND — SOMEBODY MAY STILL BE HERE
SO THAT'S HOW THE INDIANS HAVE BEEN GETTING THEIR HORSES
Having found that the ranch is empty, Jeff and Luke make camp and, after a few hours' much-needed sleep, continue their journey to Dodge City
GOLDARN IT! WHAT GOES ON? LOOKS AS IF THE WHOLE OF KANSAS IS TRYING TO GET INTO THE MARSHAL'S OFFICE
Jeff and Luke make their way to the Marshal's office no one but are disposed, [illegible]
— SORRY, MISTER — THE COLONEL IS NOT TO BE DISTURBED!
— COL. NELSON FROM FORT DODGE? BUT I BRING URGENT NEWS FOR HIM FROM INDIAN TERRITORY
JEFF ARNOLD, SIR, WITH IMPORTANT NEWS
— COME IN, ARNOLD — COME IN AND MEET THE MARSHAL — MISTER WYATT EARP
Jeff finds that Colonel Nelson knows a great deal [illegible] already
— SO, JEFF HANLON'S HAVE BEEN ATTACKED AND ANY RANCHER RESISTING HAS BEEN BRUTALLY MURDERED
— EXACTLY HOW MANY RANCHERS HAVE BEEN KILLED, MISTER EARP?
— AT LAST FIVE — MERELY BECAUSE THEY TRIED TO PROTECT THEIR PROPERTY
— UNLESS THE RANCHERS RESISTED, THE INDIANS DIDN'T FIGHT?
— WELL, YES, BUT NO MAN IS GOING TO STAND BY AND SEE HIS HORSES STOLEN
— WE'VE ORGANIZED OUR BIGGEST POSSE TO GIVE THOSE SAVAGES A TASTE OF THEIR OWN MEDICINE — AND IF WE DON'T FIND THEM, THE COLONEL AND HIS SOLDIERS WILL!
— WAIT A MINUTE, MARSHAL — THOSE INDIANS MUST BE ROUNDED UP AND TAKEN BACK TO THE AGENCY. IF YOUR MOB GET THEIR HANDS ON THEM, THERE WON'T BE ANY INDIANS LEFT AT ALL
— THAT'S UP TO LITTLE WOLF. IF HE AGREES TO SURRENDER, HE AND HIS WARRIORS WON'T GET HURT MUCH — OTHERWISE, WELL, THAT'S ANOTHER STORY
Later, as they ride out of town to Fort Dodge, the posse passes them.
— THE WAY THOSE GALOOTS ARE FEELING, I RECKON THERE'LL BE A MIGHTY BIG FIGHT WHETHER LITTLE WOLF SURRENDERS OR NOT!
— CAN'T YOU STOP THEM, COLONEL?
— NO, BUT I WILL DO MY BEST TO OVERTAKE THE INDIANS FIRST. IF THE CITIZENS' ARMY GETS THERE BEFORE I DO, THOUGH, IT'LL BE JUST TOO BAD!
Story by CHARLES CHILTON • Drawn by GERALD EMBLETON
TO BE CONTINUED

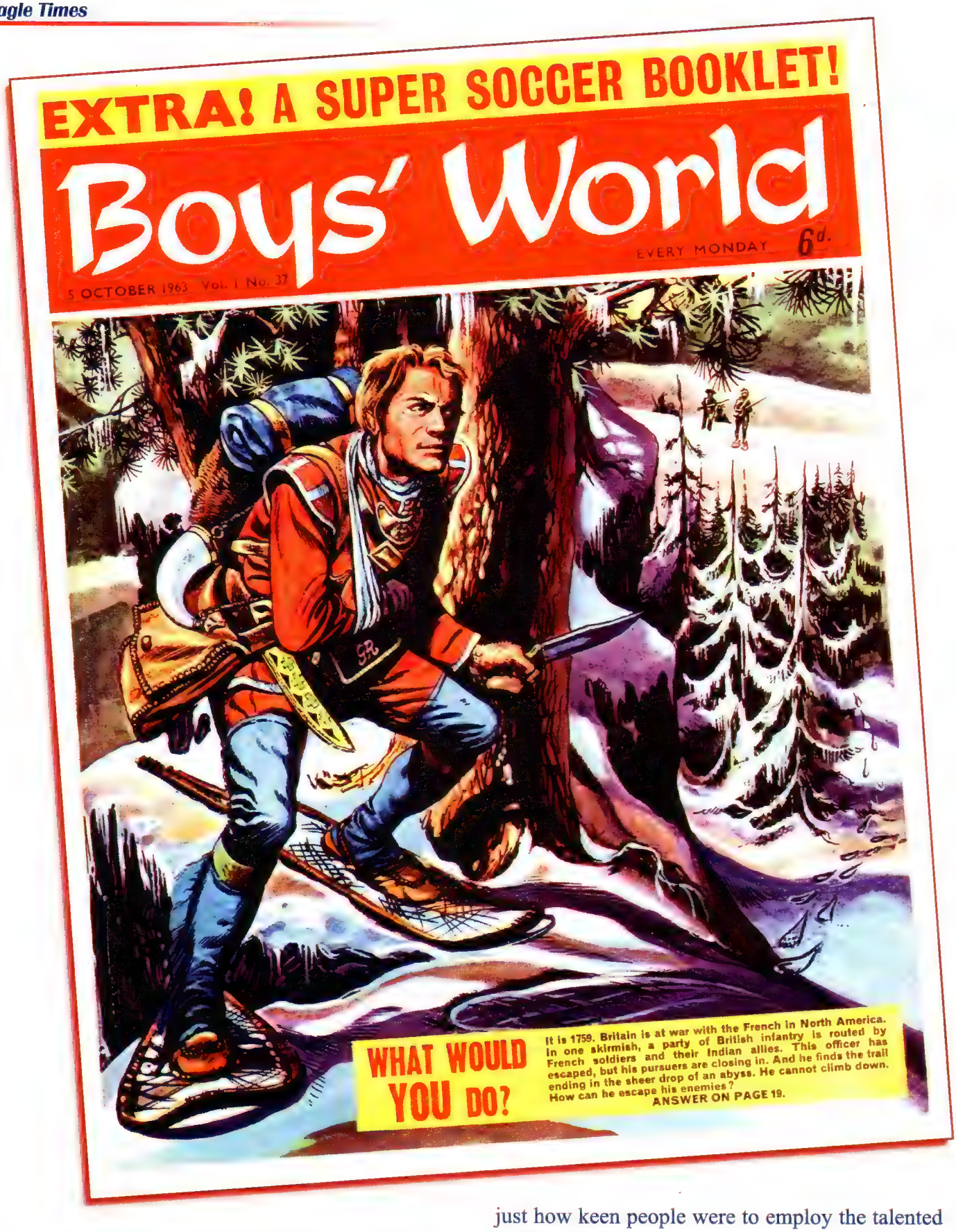
Greenwich. He prepared artwork for wallcharts of the British Army and Navy of the 1770s and advised on the preparation of a life-size "Redcoat" figure. These major projects did not occupy him to the total exclusion of other types of work he was also busy designing a poster for *Alice in Wonderland*, re-designing a set of promotional artwork for Ovaltine and, at night, working on a short-lived comic strip for *Club International* magazine. This mention of Gerry's workload recalls a story he once told me about his much-loved brother Ron. Gerry and Ron were, at the time, working in a studio together and both were "up to their eyes" in commissions. Ron had been approached to illustrate a large fold-out painting for some magazine depicting a number of famous golfers. As Ron was

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them
Volley'd and thunder'd;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
Boldly they rode and well,
Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of Hell
Rode the six hundred.

"The Charge of the Light Brigade"

Flash'd all their sabres bare,
Flash'd as they turn'd in air,
Sabring the gunners there,
Charging an army, while
All the world wonder'd:
Plunged in the battery-smoke
Right thro' the line they broke;
Cossack and Russian
Reel'd from the sabre-stroke
Shatter'd and sunder'd.
Then they rode back, but not,
Not the six hundred.

Gerry Embleton *Eagle Annual 1967*


EXTRA! A SUPER SOCCER BOOKLET!
Boys' World
EVERY MONDAY 6d.
5 OCTOBER 1963 Vol. 1 No. 37
WHAT WOULD YOU DO?
It is 1759. Britain is at war with the French in North America. In one skirmish, a party of British infantry is routed by French soldiers and their Indian allies. This officer has escaped, but his pursuers are closing in. And he finds the trail ending in the sheer drop of an abyss. He cannot climb down. How can he escape his enemies?
ANSWER ON PAGE 19.

not keen to take on the extra work at the time Gerry suggested doubling the fee, in the hope of putting off the client. When Ron did this and told the client all they said was "Fine, when can we expect the artwork!"

Ron replaced the phone, looked at Gerry and said "What do I have to do?" It was a measure of just how keen people were to employ the talented Embleton brothers.

It was thanks to brother Ron that Gerry, in 1982, illustrated the "comeback" of Britain's number one space hero 'Dan Dare'.

To be continued ❑

Next issue: 'Dan Dare' and the new *Eagle*

JOURNEY INTO SPACE: THE HOST

Steve Winders reviews Julian Simpson's new BBC radio play featuring Charles Chilton's Jet Morgan and his team of space explorers.

2.30 The Saturday Play: Journey into Space: The Host

RT CHOICE Jet Morgan and his crew get a distress call from an abandoned freighter. They must find a way to defeat the superior "Host" and save mankind from becoming a stepping-stone to a new chapter in evolution. By Julian Simpson from the series created by Charles Chilton.

Jet Morgan	**Toby Stephens**	Mitch	**Chris Pavlo**
Doc/Enceladus Control	**Alan Marriott**	The Host	**David Jacobs**
		Edie	**Jana Carpenter**
Lemmy	**Jot Davies**	JJ Andreev	**Basher Savage**

Original music and sound design by David Chilton
Producer Nick Russell-Pavier

Following last year's *Frozen in Time* comes *The Host*, a new radio play featuring the characters from Charles Chilton's famous *Journey into Space* serials of the 1950s. The new play has a new writer in Julian Simpson, whose credits include several episodes of the television series *Spooks*, *The Hustle* and *New Tricks*, where he has worked as both writer and director.

Set in 2075, *The Host* does not follow on from the events of *Frozen in Time*, which was set in 2013 and where the lead character Jet Morgan has become an old man as a consequence of his suspended animation pod failing. In the new story Jet still appears to be in his thirties. Consequently the story contradicts the earlier one. Only two cast members return from the previous production. Alan Marriott returns as Doc and David Jacobs, who played the older Jet Morgan in *Frozen in Time*, this time plays the voice of the alien "host" of the title. Toby Stephens plays Jet. His best-known roles include Prince John in the BBC's recent *Robin Hood* television series and the villain in the James Bond film *Die Another Day*. He also played Bond himself in a radio version of *Doctor No*. The other members of Jet's crew are Lemmy, who is played by Chris Pavlo, replacing Chris Moran; and Mitch, played by Jot Davies, who replaces Michael Beckley. As in *Frozen in Time* and a previous play *The Return From Mars*, made in 1981, the new actors make no attempt to imitate or copy the tones or vocal mannerisms of their predecessors in the original trilogy. However in *The Host* I found it initially difficult to distinguish between Jet and Mitch because the tones of the actors' voices were not as contrasting as in past productions.

Despite these changes the new play echoes the pace and mood of *Frozen in Time*. David Chilton's impressive musical scores are a prominent feature of both productions and the director Nicholas Russell-Pavier ensures a fast pace in both. Jet's spaceship *Ares*, which made its first appearance in last year's play, is once again featured and both stories begin with *Ares* on its way back to Earth from Neptune, answering a call for help. The new adventure poses a much greater danger to Earth than *Frozen in Time*, with an entity called "the Host" threatening to direct the development of the universe. There are also some interesting science fiction elements in the story, although as in most science fiction today none are completely original. Nevertheless, as Jet and his crew speculate on the nature and purpose of the "Host", their ideas and the events of the story provide much food for reflection for the listener, which is a sign of good science fiction whether it is original or not.

Tacconi's illustration from Express Weekly

When Jet responds to a distress call from an abandoned freighter he finds the personality of a former colleague J. J. Andreiev, who was believed to be dead, locked inside the ship's computer. Aided by Andreiev's digitised personality the computer hijacks the one controlling the *Ares* and takes Jet's ship to a research base orbiting Saturn's moon Enceladus, where newly discovered alien bacteria are being monitored. Here the entity within the computer now takes over Enceladus' computer and begins to control the growth and development of the simple alien life forms, accelerating their progress and mutating them for its own purpose. While the computer is busy with this mammoth task, Jet manages to connect his mind into the computer to communicate with Andreiev who was previously being partly controlled by the entity. Assisted by Mitch and Edie, a scientist from Enceladus, they discover the nature, origin and purpose of the "Host" …

The play builds up the tension well as the plot steadily unfolds and the convincing performances of the actors are obviously crucial to its success. Toby Stephens made a confident, yet reflective Jet. Alan Marriott's performance as Doc was much more reminiscent of the trilogy's Guy Kingsley Poynter than in his previous outing, although his voice is much different. Freed from the sub-plot in *Frozen in Time* of waking up from his suspended animation in a much younger state, he was able to present a more traditional interpretation of the character and his narrations strongly echoed the style of those in the original trilogy. Jot Davies as Mitch also gave a strong performance and he and Toby Stephens carried the narrative of the story well in their exchanges. I felt that they conveyed the emotion, tension and excitement of their situation more effectively than Jana Carpenter as Edie, the scientist on the Enceladus base, who didn't seem to be particularly moved by the events and revelations that were unfolding before her. To be fair, the character was rather phlegmatic and presumably Ms. Carpenter was acting as directed, presenting a contrast to the other characters. She is married to Julian Simpson.

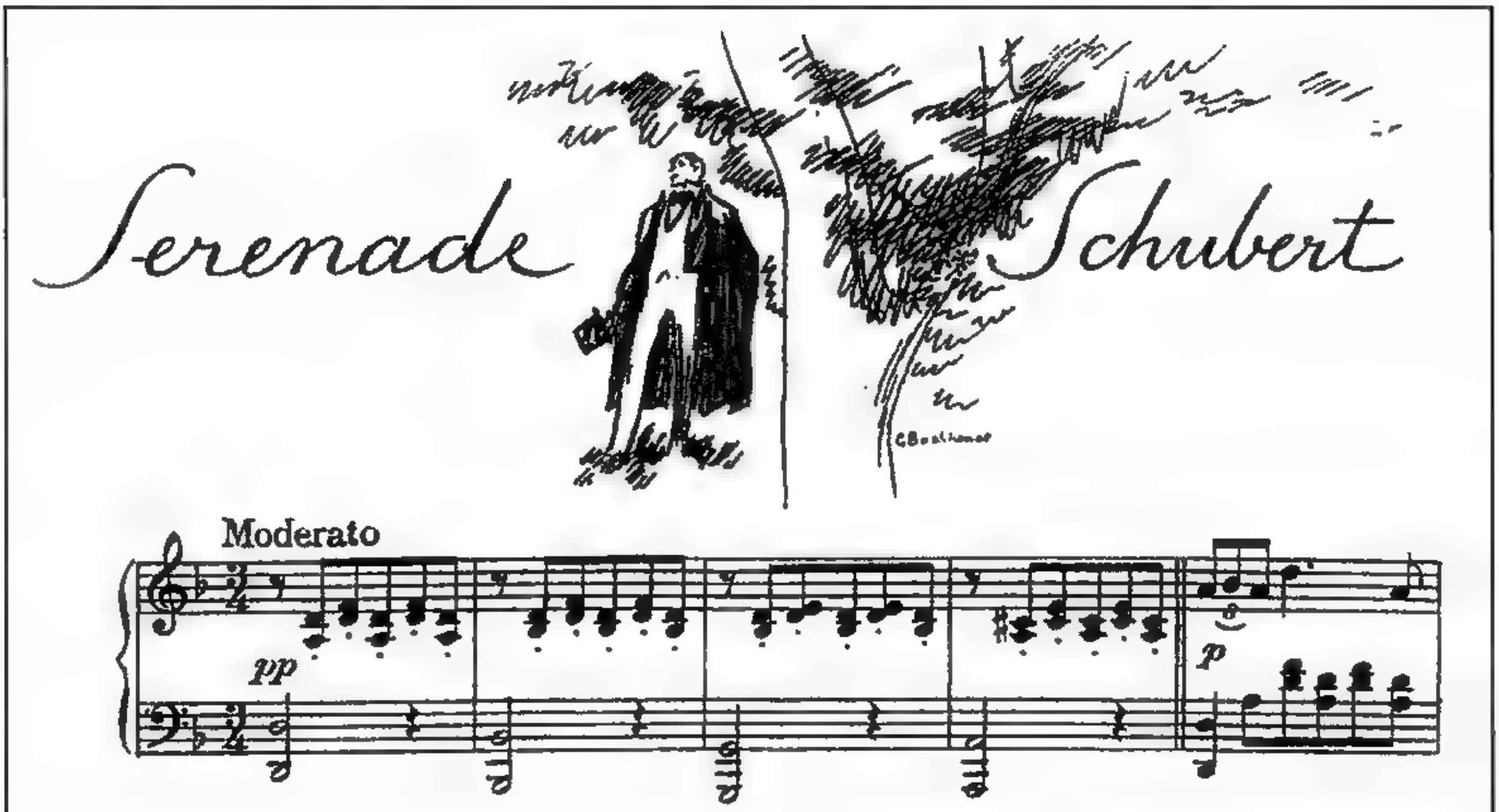
Chris Pavlo as the cockney radio operator Lemmy had a noticeably deeper voice than any of his predecessors in the role. He was not given many opportunities for the witty observations associated with his character, but as always he asked the questions on the listeners' behalf when the science became too technical. David Jacobs' voice was electronically modified as the "Host". Despite being the villain of the piece, or more correctly "villains", he did not have a large role and it was made more difficult by the unemotional nature of the entity. Nevertheless, as he proved in both *The Red Planet* and *The World in Peril* from the original trilogy, he is well able to convey the cold menace of the emotionless. Basher Savage as J. J. Andreiev successfully conveyed the jovial but slightly sinister character of Jet's Russian colleague.

As a story, *The Host* is much stronger than *Frozen in Time*, although it lacks the clever wit of its predecessor. Exactly why it does not follow on from *Frozen in Time* is not clear. Arguably the notion of Jet as a captain in his seventies, while a most appropriate theme for the earlier play, could not be sustained indefinitely, although he could provide a role model for older listeners who remember the original from first time around! But while the first three stories formed a connected trilogy, the last three contradict each other. So what of the future? Will this play lead on to other connected stories or even disconnected ones? On the strength of *The Host* I would certainly welcome more, although I believe that science fiction works better as a serial, allowing the gradual discovery of the unknown and the steady unravelling of mystery. All Britain's greatest science fiction productions, from the original *Journey into Space* through *Quatermass* and *A for Andromeda* to *Doctor Who* have been serials. The effectiveness of science fiction as a serial has even been confirmed since the broadcast of *The Host* by the recent *Torchwood* serial broadcast on BBC1, which is far superior to the two series of single-episode programmes which preceded it. ❑

The "Musical" Backhouse

by David Gould

During 1933/34 George Backhouse was commissioned to draw black and white illustrations for Amalgamated Press's weekly part-work *Master Melodies of the World*: one drawing heading each piece of printed music. The series began on 12th October, 1933 and was completed in about 30 weekly parts. The drawings, though simple and rather sketchy, are quite atmospheric, each one being "inspired" by the individual piece of music to which it related. There were nine sketches each week. ❑



PC49 and The Case of The Murderous Mouse

by Alan Stranks Adapted for *Eagle Times* by Jon Johnson Part 3

The story so far: *A late-night robbery at Benson's warehouse is witnessed by a police informer - an old beggar, named Snorky Palmer. The boss of the criminal gang decides to do away with Palmer by gassing him when drunk. He breaks a gas pipe in Palmer's flat when he is out, stuffs it with cheese and when the old beggar returns in a drunken state, he puts a mouse under the door.*

Snorky is gassed and Archie finds a dead mouse when inspecting the dead man's flat. He tells Wilson and Wright of his theories but they will not listen.

Later Archie and Joan search the local pet shops for any information about a buyer of a white mouse. They hit upon a suspect and make their way back to Snorky's flat and speak with Mrs Murphy, his landlady.

Archie walked back toward the door. "I just want to have another look at that place where it was leaking."

Through the doorway, Archie heard Mrs Murphy saying "It's not a very big 'ole but it finished off Snorky all right."

Joan's voice also travelled through the doorway. "Do hurry, Archie!"

Archie walked into Snorky's room and made straight for the broken gas pipe. He examined one jagged end and found remnants of cheese attached to it.

Just then, Joan walked in. "What is it? What have you found?"

"There's fragments of cheese round this hole."

Mystified, Joan asked, "Cheese? What's that doing there?"

Deep in thought, the young policeman answered, "I think Bumper Todd's got the answer to that question."

* * * * * * *

Back at Stingo's house, the three criminals were celebrating their success.

"Well, there's one thing – Snorky Palmer's squeaked for the last time," said Mick.

Bumper laughed. "So has that mouse. Blimey - you had me rattled, Stingo, when you said we was goin' to do Snorky in! But we didn't, did we? The mouse did it for us."

Stingo didn't seem to be sharing his partner's jubilation. "Yeah... Listen, Bumper – I've been checking this dough over. That bundle of notes you picked up on the floor at the warehouse."

"What about it?"

"There was a band round those notes marked a hundred quid."

"So what?"

"You said you gave old Snorky two quid."

"So I did. That's right."

With a tense face, Stingo looked at Bumper. "There's only seventy-eight quid here. Come on – what did you do with rest of it?"

"Why, you dirty double-crosser!" snarled Mick.

Bumper recoiled. Now scared he cried out, "No – no! Lay off! I reckon a few of 'em must have come loose in my pocket."

The explanation cut no ice with Stingo. "You stinking twister. I ought to bash your face in."

Mick was equally angry. "Go on – let him have it, Stingo!"

Really scared now, Bumper cowered down. "No – no! Don't hit me, Stingo. You can take it out of my cut."

"I'll take it all right – ten times over – just to teach you a lesson."

Bumper, trying to talk himself out of a good hiding, mumbled, "I didn't know, I tell you! I just found 'em loose in my pocket."

Stingo held back. "Have you spent any of them?" he asked.

Anxious to clear himself, Bumper said softly, "No – I swear I haven't! Look – I still got 'em here."

As Bumper pulled a wad of notes from his back pocket, Stingo's right arm swung round and snatched the money away. "Give me these," he snarled.

Mick shook his head. "Fine rat you turned out to be. If we did what was right we'd cut you out of the split and leave you with nothing for your trouble."

The following evening the two detectives, Archie and Joan were assembled in C.I. Wilson's office.

Joan was not happy. "I missed the pictures Friday night and spent all yesterday following the trail of that confounded mouse, Inspector. It's too bad. Archie's devotion to duty's is ruining my love life."

Archie tried to calm her down. "Quiet, Joan!"

Wilson puffed on his pipe and sat back in his chair. "I expect we can arrange for him to have enough time off to make up the loss, Miss Carr."

Wright chipped in with "You did a fine job – both of you."

"Nothing to it, Sarge!" said Archie modestly.

Wright continued, "Bumper's squawked enough to fill a book. They're for the high jump – all three of them."

Wilson came in with "Apparently Stingo and Mick Hill went to Snorky Palmer's room on Friday morning while Mrs Murphy was away. They fractured the gas pipe and filled it with cheese."

Joan followed with "I've heard of people doing that with soap..."

Wright continued the story. "When Snorky came back, locked himself in and started his boozing session, Bumper sneaked up the stairs and bunged the mouse in under the door. They hadn't given it anything to eat so it made straight for the cheese."

Wilson then put a further part to the story in. "The creature gnawed the cheese off the pipe and dragged a piece of it away."

Back came Wright, "And then the gas seeped into the room, overcoming Palmer..."

Joan continued, "And killing the mouse as well."

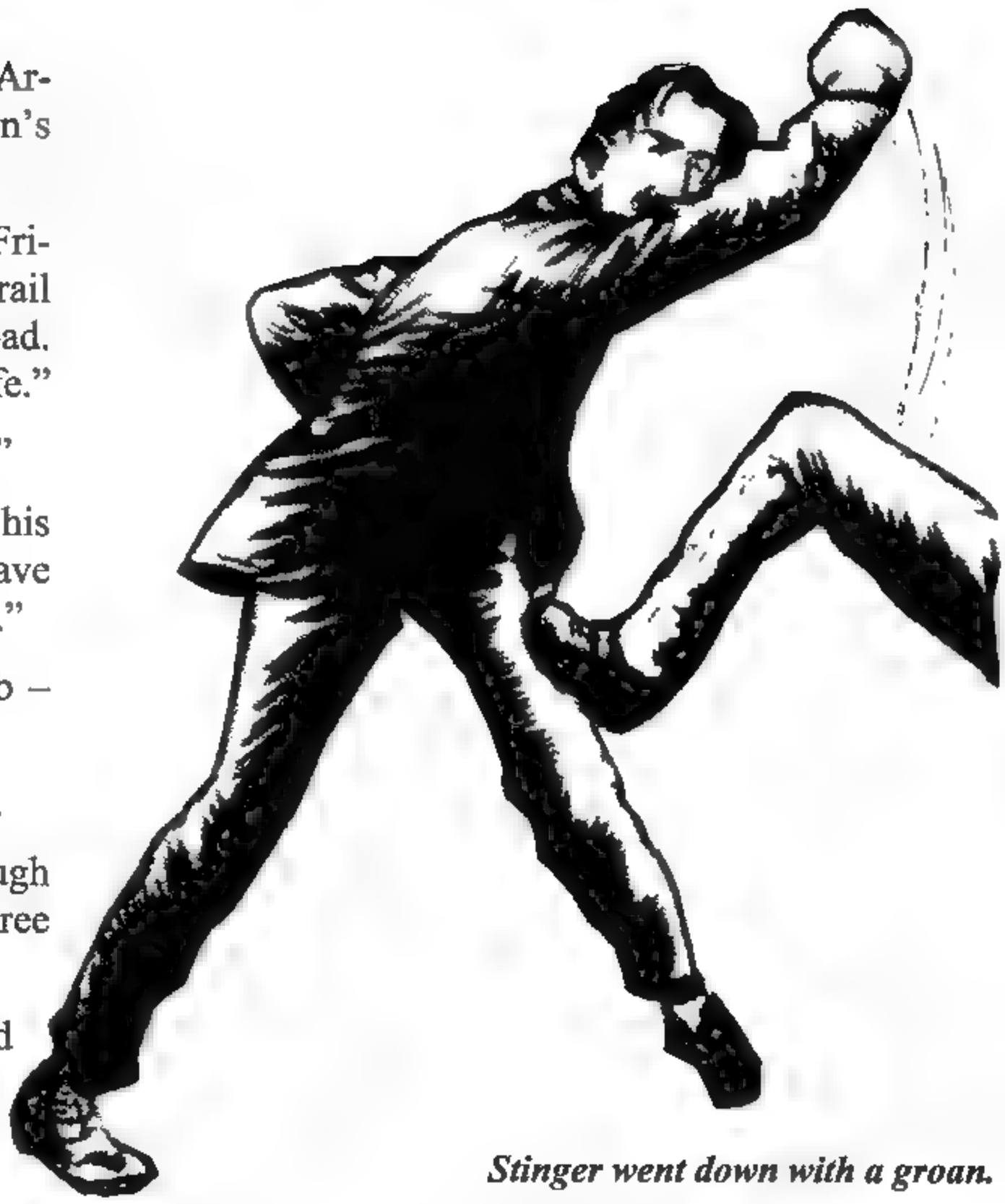
Wright nodded. "Yes. Only a thug with a warped mind like Stingo's could think up a fantastic scheme like that."

The Chief Inspector puffed on his pipe. "Fantastic or not – he almost got away with it."

"All very sordid and unpleasant," said Joan.

Wright shook his head. "Life's like that, Miss Carr."

"Mine's not going to be." She took hold of Archie's arm. "Come on, Archie."



Stinger went down with a groan.

"Er – may I go now, sir?" he asked.

Wilson nodded. "Yes. And again, congratulations on your excellent deduction."

Joan pulled at Archie's arm. "Goodnight, Inspector."

He pulled back for a moment. "Oh – er – sir?"

"What is it?" asked the C.I.

"Considering the unusual aspects of this case, I thought you'd like to keep this."

Archie fumbled about in his jacket pocket and pulled out a dead mouse. He laid it on Wilson's desk. "The mouse, sir. The – er – murderous mouse. It's dead, but I thought you might like to get it stuffed and keep it as a souvenir."

"What?" shouted Wilson. Wright couldn't help a snigger and a cough.

"Cheese it, Archie," said Joan, anxious to get away.

Disgusted, Wilson pushed the dead animal toward Wright. "Well, of all the...! Get him and his mouse out of here, Wright."

"Out you go, Fortynine!"

"On my way, Sarge! Just coming, Joan! Goodnight all!" ❑

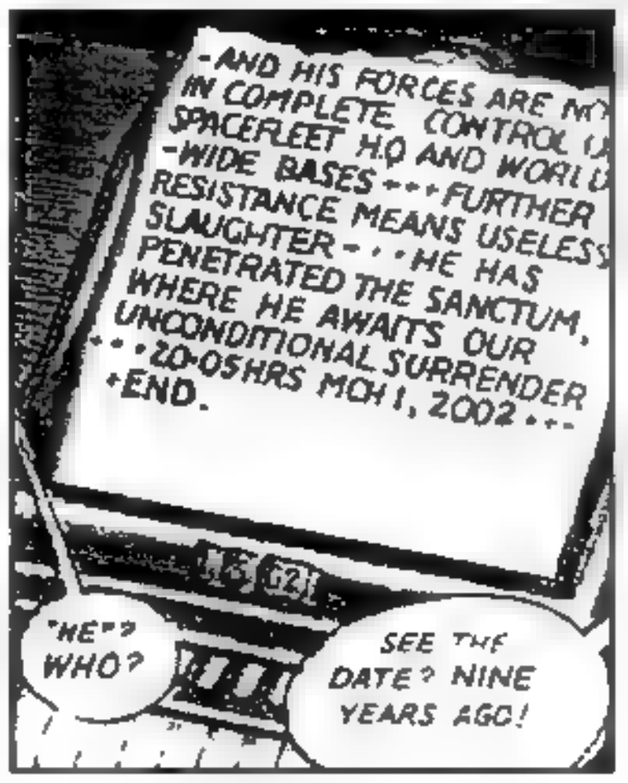
Lost Continuity

by Charles Evans Gunther

One of my recent surprises was reading again Basil Dawson's *Dan Dare on Mars* and enjoying it very much. It is nicely constructed and the author seems to have done his homework. He has checked out the dates and even mentions how long human beings have been on Mars: "Of course the Pleons have known for the last forty years that we earthmen have been on Mars" (page 44). This suits well the reference to the Mars landing of 1965 reported in the *Daily World Post.* (*EAGLE*, 29th September 1950 Vol. 1 No. 25, page 1) Sadly the whole story became forgotten and continuity was lost by the time of 'Reign of the Robots'.

Dan Dare on Mars begins with a precise time and date - "16.45 hours Greenwich Mean Time on the afternoon of 4th May in the year AD 2002" (page 9). The adventure takes place over the next few weeks but this period causes problems with the timeline of the *EAGLE* strip.

We learn in the 'The Man from Nowhere' that two and a half to three years had passed since the destruction of the Red Moon, which can be dated to October 1999. (*EAGLE*, 7th October, 1955 Vol. 6 No. 40, page 2) So the flight to Cryptos must have begun in 2002. Yet by the time Dan and Co. return to Earth with 'Reign of the Robots' a problem appears. A precise time and date for the Mekon's defeat of Earth is indicated by a teleprinter - "20.05 HRS MCH 1, 2002" (*EAGLE*, 1st March, 1957, Vol. 8 No. 9, page 2)



EAGLE Vol 8 No 9

Here, therefore, is a big clash of dates - *Dan Dare on Mars* begins 4th May 2002, yet the Mekon has invaded and defeated Earth by March 2002. A lot has to be crammed into the time line because we know from 'Operation Saturn' that 2002 had already started while this adventure was going on.

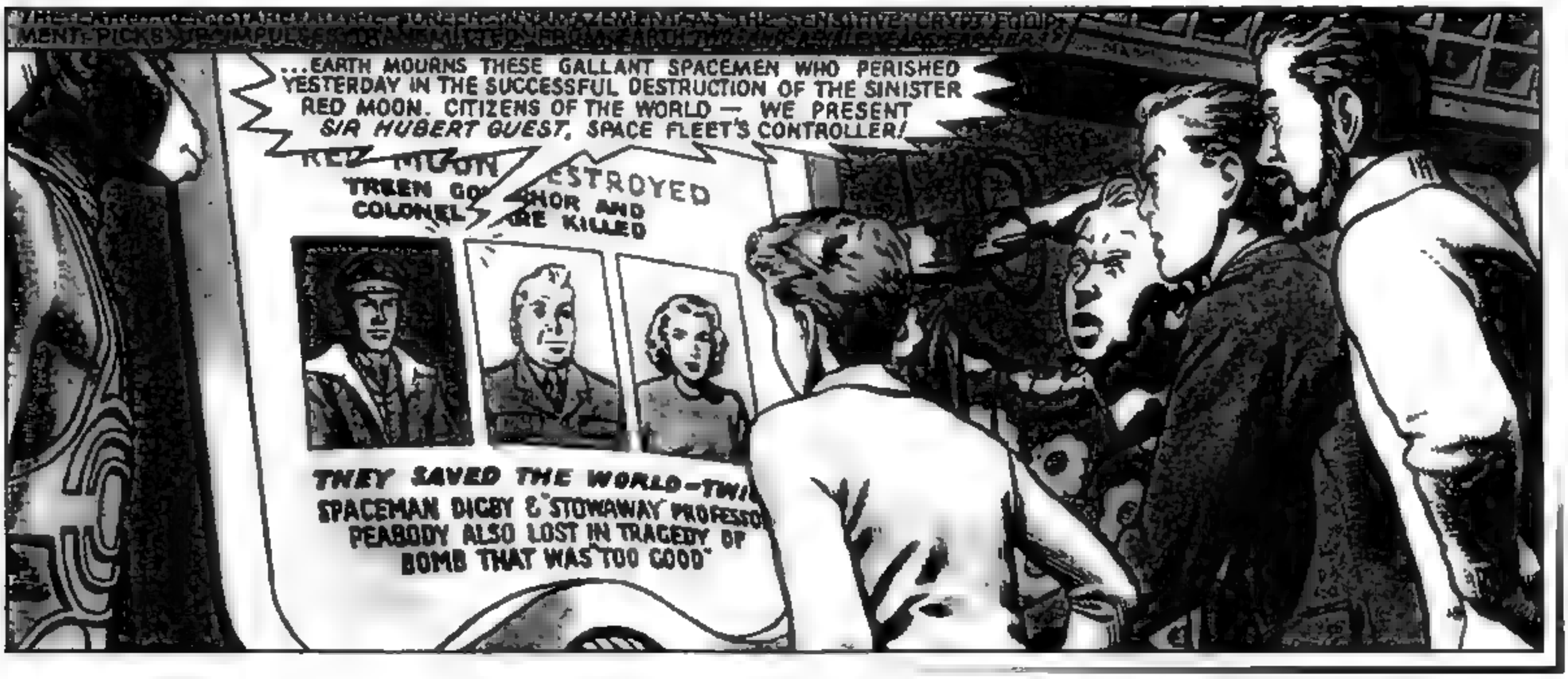
However, there is something strange about the teleprinter illustration.

Look carefully at the final line of the message. All the rest of the printout is black but this line has blue under it and when the year 2002 is reproduced there is a different number under the two. On close inspection it would seem to be the number 9. Yet the conversations that take place on the page and later in the story point to the defeat as being nine years previous to Dan's return to Earth.

What happened here? Did Frank Hampson have something up his sleeve and the Mekon was lying about the dates? Had the teleprinter been doctored by the Treens? Or is it a mistake in the artwork? With the 1st March 2002 date we have to cancel *Dan Dare on Mars* from the timeline. But then the happenings on Mars in this story are never referred to after the event and the Pleons are never mentioned.

Anyway, it is an interesting anomaly. ❑

EAGLE Vol 6 No 40


...EARTH MOURNS THESE GALLANT SPACEMEN WHO PERISHED YESTERDAY IN THE SUCCESSFUL DESTRUCTION OF THE SINISTER RED MOON. CITIZENS OF THE WORLD — WE PRESENT SIR HUBERT GUEST, SPACE FLEET'S CONTROLLER!
RED MOON
ESTROYED
THEY SAVED THE WORLD-TWI
SPACEMAN DIGBY & STOWAWAY PROFESSO
PEABODY ALSO LOST IN TRAGEDY OF
BOMB THAT WAS TOO GOOD"

Lost Continuity - a Postscipt

by David Gould

That date on the teleprinter "Mch 1, 2002" has always puzzled me too, as well as Charles Evans Gunther, ever since first seeing it in 1957. While I do not know why the date was changed, or who ordered it to be changed (Editorial? Hampson studio?), I can be fairly sure that it was done at a very late stage in the printing schedule of the paper.

It looks to me as though 2009 was the date as originally lettered on the picture and was left unchanged on Bemrose's blue negative; and changed to 2002 only on Bemrose's black negative by someone at Long Lane, Liverpool. (Remember that *EAGLE*'s colour pages were reproduced by a combination of four colour negatives: red (magenta), blue (cyan), yellow and black.)

You can see that the second "2" in the date is different in style from the first "2". If it had been patched over on the original artwork the "9" would not have been visible, hence my strong belief that the alteration was made by Bemrose on one plate but not the other.

The speech ballon "See the date? XXX years ago!" was, however, altered by a lettering artist at Hulton House; and I should dearly like to know what was beneath the "nine" as published. With my knowledge of balloon lettering I can tell that the "nine" is in a different hand from the rest of the lettering - you can see it doesn't slope as much, it is slightly bolder, and is slightly higher than "date?".

All this demonstrates to me that "nine" was patched over the word beneath it. In addition, Lex's balloon " '2002'- That's nine years ago" is in different lettering from that on the rest of the page.

I do agree with Charles that in 'Dan Dare' too much was crammed into the year 2003 or later. It must have been after this debacle that Hampson decided not to give dates for any future 'Dan Dare' stories.

May I also point out that Ray Aspden has already written about this anomaly as long ago as December 1981? See *Astral Group Forum* No. 3 page 13. ❑

Colour Printing in *Eagle*

The next six pages contain reproductions from *EAGLE*-sized sheets showing most of the various stages in the printing by Eric Bemrose Ltd of a 'Dan Dare' page from 1957. These sheets - which included an all yellow page, not suitable for reproduction here - were sent by Bemrose to Hulton House, though whether this was normal practice or not is unknown. Anyway, they survived until 1968, just before an office move from Long Acre to High Holborn - to be retained by one-time Odhams employee David Gould ever since.

For readers without access to *EAGLE* Vol. 2 No. 1 the following description of how colour printing in photogravure was done may be helpful.

Each colour original was photographed four times through a prismatic lens with four different colour filters (Yellow, red, blue and black). Positives were through a prismatic lens with four different colour filters (yellow, red, blue and black). Positives were made from retouched negatives and exposed together with a fine screen to a sensitized pigment paper covered with soluble gelatine. The pigment paper, one for each, colour, was transferred to a copper cylinder then stripped off, leaving the gelatine impression. This gelatine resist was engraved by pouring iron perchloride in varying solutions over the cylinder.

The complete set of four cylinders was then fitted to the printing machine: the first cylinder revolving in a bath of yellow ink, the second in a bath of red ink, the third in blue and the fourth in black. A web paper was threaded up and this ran through and around each cylinder in turn, receiving yellow first, then red superimposed on the yellow, then blue added to the red/yellow, then finally the black ink which gave the complete four-colour reproduction. As with water-colour painting, light colours come first with darker colours added: red and yellow making orange, blue and yellow making green etc. ❑

Red component of page - which was printed onto the yellow image (not shown)

Blue component of page - which was printed over the red and yellow combination

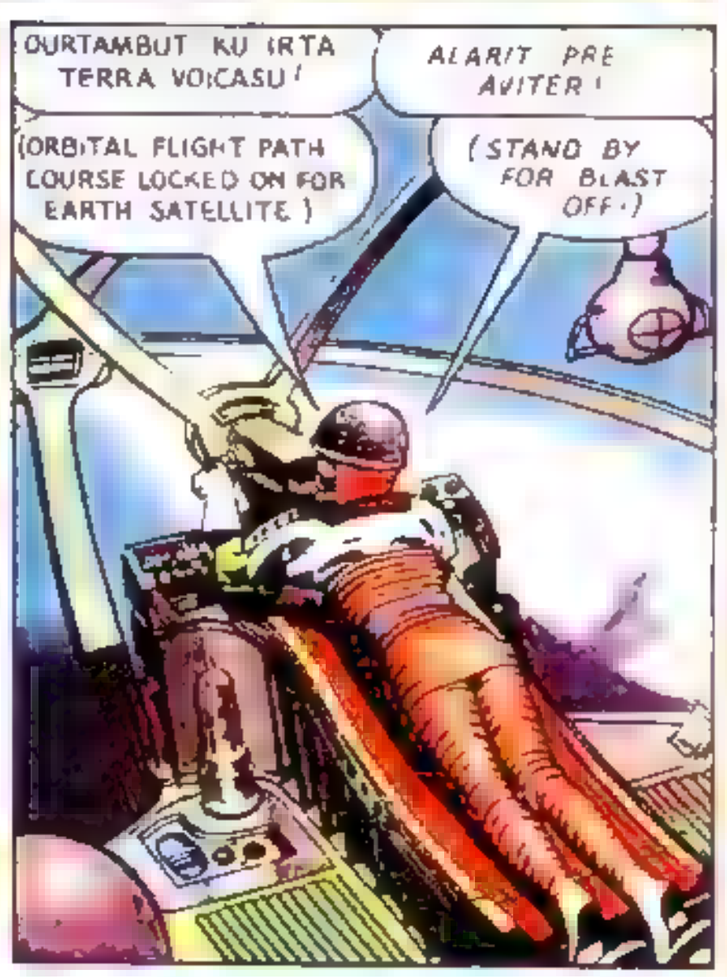
Result of combining (printing) yellow, red and blue images

FOOL — TO THINK THAT YOU COULD BETRAY ME!
FRANK HAMPSON & DON HARLEY
PITY THAT GUN WOULDN'T WORK ON YOU — YOU SKINNY, GREEN BEAN!
SHALL I DESTROY HIM NOW, O FLAWLESS ONE?
NOT YET — PUT HIM ABOARD WITH THE OTHER PRISONERS
SOMEHOW THIS FAT FOOL HAS DECEIVED ME — HE MUST NOT DIE UNTIL I DISCOVER THE REASON!
NICE WORK, DIG — BUT I'M AFRAID YOU'RE DUE TO COP IT RED-HOT AT MEKONTA
WHO CARES? I WAS FED UP WITH BOWING AND SCRAPING TO YON OVERGROWN MICROBE!
TO THINK WE EVER DOUBTED YOU!
WHAT A BOY!
MON AMI!
HEY!
JUST AN OLD FRENCH CUSTOM, DIG!
OURTAMBUT IKU IRTA TERRA VOICASU!
ALARIT PRE AVITER!
(ORBITAL FLIGHT PATH COURSE LOCKED ON FOR EARTH SATELLITE)
(STAND BY FOR BLAST OFF!)
DOESN'T IT MAKE YOU SICK TO THINK OF THESE GREEN DRIPS DRIVING AN HONEST FLEETSHIP LIKE THIS?
CAREFUL WHAT YOU SAY, OUR TIN GUARDS ARE LISTENING!
PSST! COLONEL DARE, TAKE THIS!
E DIARY ASTRAL COLLEGE DIARY
WHAT HAS FLAMER UP HIS SLEEVE? CAN ANYTHING HELP DAN AND CO NOW, AS THEY SPEED TOWARDS THE MEKON'S STRONGHOLD? DON'T MISS NEXT WEEK'S THRILLING EPISODE · DAN'S DARING!

2 All copyright of Dan Dare Pilot of the Future is vested in Hulton Press Ltd

The black image - which would be printed over the yellow, red and blue

NICE WORK, DIG — BUT I'M AFRAID YOU'RE DUE TO COP IT RED-HOT AT MEKONTA
WHO CARES? I WAS FED UP WITH BOWING AND SCRAPING TO YON OVERGROWN MICROBE!


OURTAMBUT KU IRTA TERRA VOICASU!
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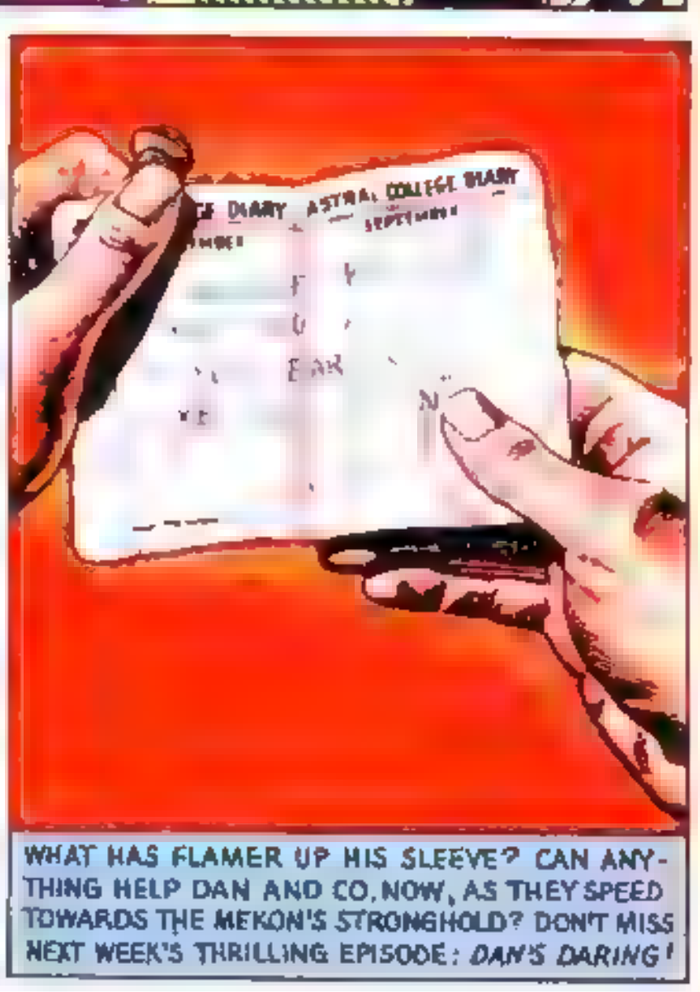


WHAT HAS FLAMER UP HIS SLEEVE? CAN ANYTHING HELP DAN AND CO. NOW, AS THEY SPEED TOWARDS THE MEKON'S STRONGHOLD? DON'T MISS NEXT WEEK'S THRILLING EPISODE: *DAN'S DARING!*

2 All copyright of Dan Dare Pilot of the Future is vested in Hulton Press Ltd

Final result of the 4-colour photogravure process - combining yellow, red, blue and black images

HULTON'S MERCHANDISING – 1954

SALES SOAR WITH

EAGLE

EAGLE. Over 2,250,000 children read EAGLE every week — follow every week the adventures of its nationally-famous strip-cartoon characters (who hasn't heard of Dan Dare ?). Here is a vast enthusiastic children's market — already sold on everything connected with EAGLE

GIRL. The sister paper to Eagle has been welcomed by girls everywhere. They're as excited about GIRL as their brothers are over Eagle. GIRL's circulation is soaring up and up and up. Here's an opportunity for manufacturers to capture a big market — that's expanding every week

YOU GET IMMEDIATE NATIONAL ACCEPTANCE OF YOUR MERCHANDISE WITH AN EAGLE OR GIRL LICENCE

Licensing enquiries to: JOHN MYERS, HULTON ENTERPRISES, Hulton Press Ltd. 18/22 Furnival St., London, E.C.4. Tel.: CHA. 4531

This Eagle and Girl merchandising advertisement appeared in the trade magazine Games and Toys in 1954

Another EAGLE Dummy?

by Charles Evans Gunther

Some time ago I found a photograph (shown near right) on a website reporting for an independent comic journal (*Redeye* - Ed.) about the Manchester Dan Dare exhibition. For me the first thing that stands out is the interesting spacesuit.

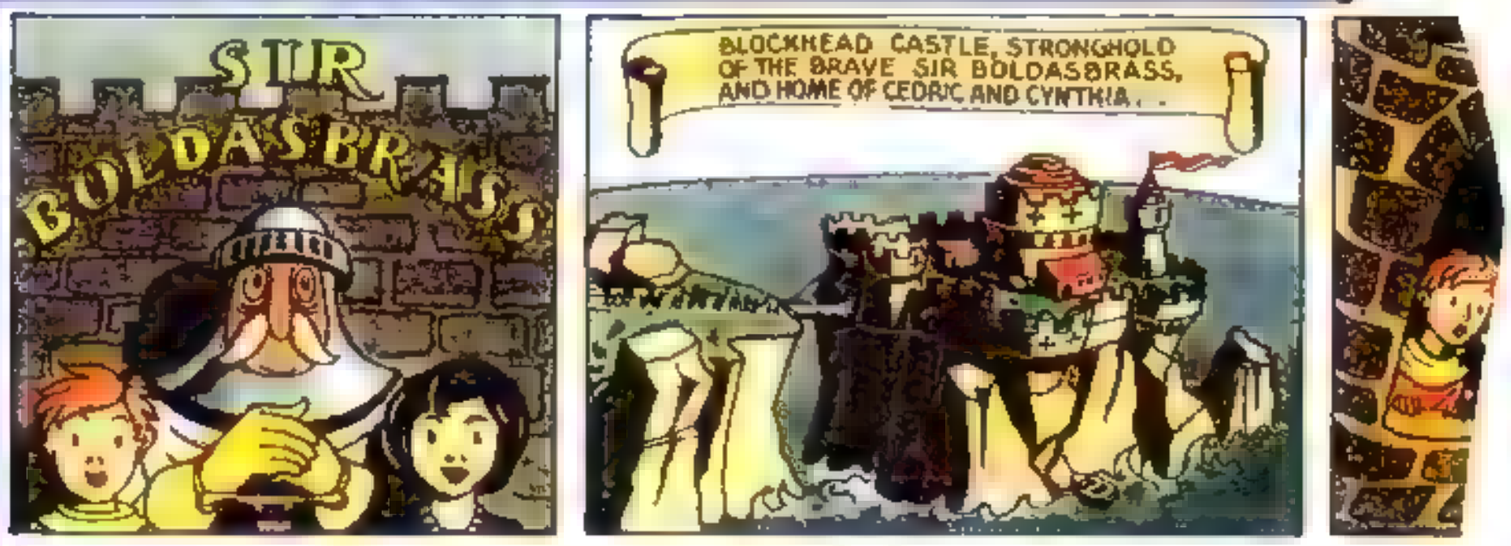
There is Dan with a cloak, looking rather old fashioned, but next to him is a man in a spacesuit that looks far more interesting than the one used in the saga (see detail far right). Of course, the gold helmet and overalls are now iconic but, if this is a genuine dummy of *EAGLE*, then this spacesuit knocks spots off the iconic one.

If you know this page, I would like to see a larger one as the one on the website could not be enlarged. ❑

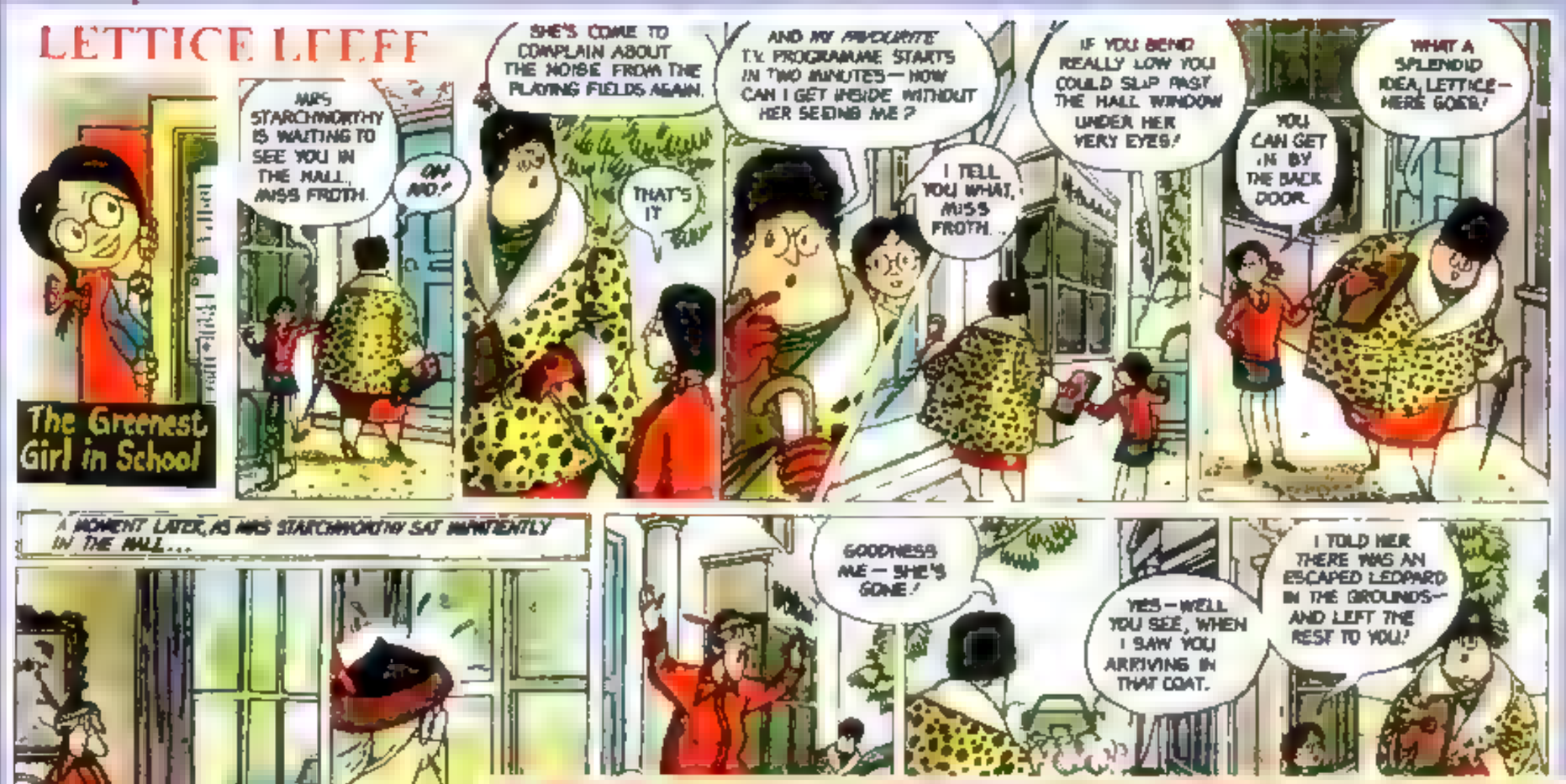
Above, left: A "Photoshop enhancement" from the picture found by Charles in the Redeye review at http://www.enginecomics.co.uk/redeye/redeye2/dandare/dandarereport.htm

Above, right: For comparison, the better known EAGLE dummy that was shown in Living with Eagles, Marcus Morris' biography, and which can also be found on the web.

John Ryan in his studio, 1993


SIR BOLDASBRASS
BLOCKHEAD CASTLE, STRONGHOLD OF THE BRAVE SIR BOLDASBRASS, AND HOME OF CEDRIC AND CYNTHIA . .
OPEN THE GATES, VARLETS! I AM AWAY.
UP WITH IT, QUICK! THIS WILL STOP HIM!

John's work for Hulton Press

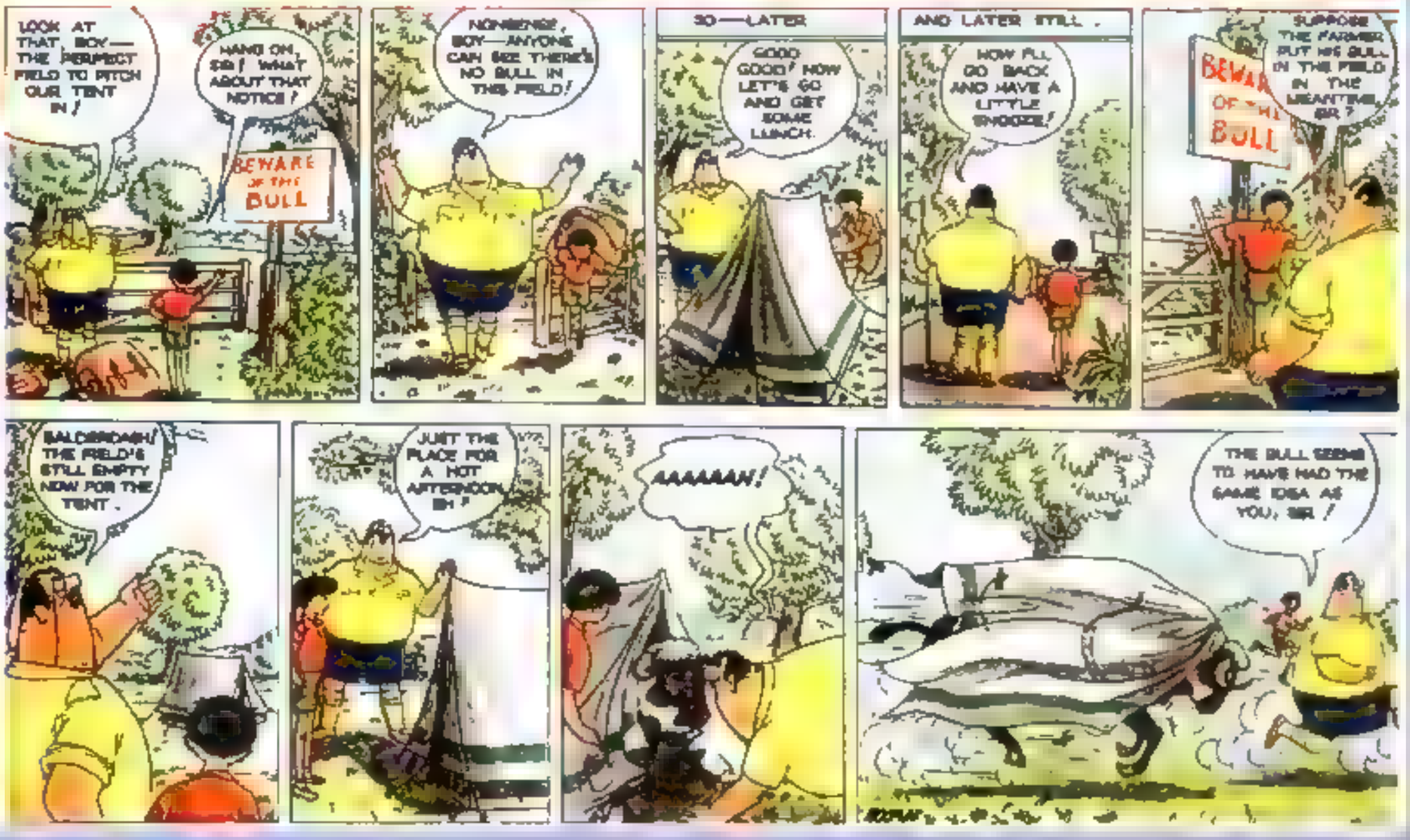

LETTICE LEEFE
The Greenest Girl in School
MRS STARCHWORTHY IS WAITING TO SEE YOU IN THE HALL, MISS FROTH.
OH NO!
SHE'S COME TO COMPLAIN ABOUT THE NOISE FROM THE PLAYING FIELDS AGAIN.
THAT'S IT
AND MY FAVOURITE T.V. PROGRAMME STARTS IN TWO MINUTES — HOW CAN I GET INSIDE WITHOUT HER SEEING ME?
I TELL YOU WHAT, MISS FROTH...
IF YOU BEND REALLY LOW YOU COULD SLIP PAST THE HALL WINDOW UNDER HER VERY EYES!
YOU CAN GET IN BY THE BACK DOOR.
WHAT A SPLENDID IDEA, LETTICE — HERE GOES!
A MOMENT LATER, AS MRS STARCHWORTHY SAT IMPATIENTLY IN THE HALL...
GOODNESS ME — SHE'S GONE!
YES — WELL YOU SEE, WHEN I SAW YOU ARRIVING IN THAT COAT.
I TOLD HER THERE WAS AN ESCAPED LEOPARD IN THE GROUNDS — AND LEFT THE REST TO YOU!

Sir Boldasbrass
(*Swift*)

Lettice Leefe
(*Girl*)

Captain Pugwash,
Harris Tweed
(*EAGLE*)

Harris Tweed, EXTRA SPECIAL AGENT


LOOK AT THAT, BOY — THE PERFECT FIELD TO PITCH OUR TENT IN!
HANG ON, SIR! WHAT ABOUT THAT NOTICE?
BEWARE OF THE BULL
NONSENSE, BOY — ANYONE CAN SEE THERE'S NO BULL IN THIS FIELD!
SO — LATER
GOOD GOOD! NOW LET'S GO AND GET SOME LUNCH.
AND LATER STILL...
HOW I'LL GO BACK AND HAVE A LITTLE SNOOZE!
SUPPOSE THE FARMER PUT HIS BULL IN THE FIELD IN THE MEANTIME, SIR?
BEWARE OF THE BULL
BALDERDASH! THE FIELD'S STILL EMPTY NOW FOR THE TENT.
JUST THE PLACE FOR A HOT AFTERNOON, EH?
AAAAAAH!
THE BULL SEEMS TO HAVE HAD THE SAME IDEA AS YOU, SIR!

JOHN RYAN (1921–2009)

An obituary by Steve Winders

Members of the Harris Tweed Appreciation Society briefly exchanged their tweed jackets for black blazers following the sad death of their hero's creator John Ryan on July 22nd in Rye Cottage Hospital in East Sussex, aged 88. John was one of those rare *EAGLE* contributors whose greatest success came after his time on the paper. Famous for his 'Captain Pugwash' books and cartoons about a greedy but timid pirate, John was not put off by the captain's initial lukewarm reception in *EAGLE* in 1950, but returned to the character six years later, featuring him in story books and short films that he made himself.

In the meantime he created another character for *EAGLE* in 'Harris Tweed, Extra Special Agent' who proved more popular with readers and ran for eleven years. For the first three years John produced a whole page story for Tweed every week. These stories each included five lines of strip and averaged twenty one frames per week, which must have been a challenge to draw, quite apart from the humorous thrilling plots and interesting characters with witty names that John created. He was also busy teaching art at Harrow School at the time as well! In 'Harris Tweed' his heavy use of black ink to create shadows and swarthy villains enhanced the dark mood of the strip in which danger and hilarity existed side by side. The pompous but incompetent Tweed, whose success in fighting crime depended entirely on a young boy who accompanied him in his adventures and saved him from the disasters that regularly befell him, was a brilliant creation. Tweed's "Boy" who was never even given a name inspired Tom the cabin boy in the later 'Pugwash' adventures, performing a similar role in saving Pugwash from trouble.

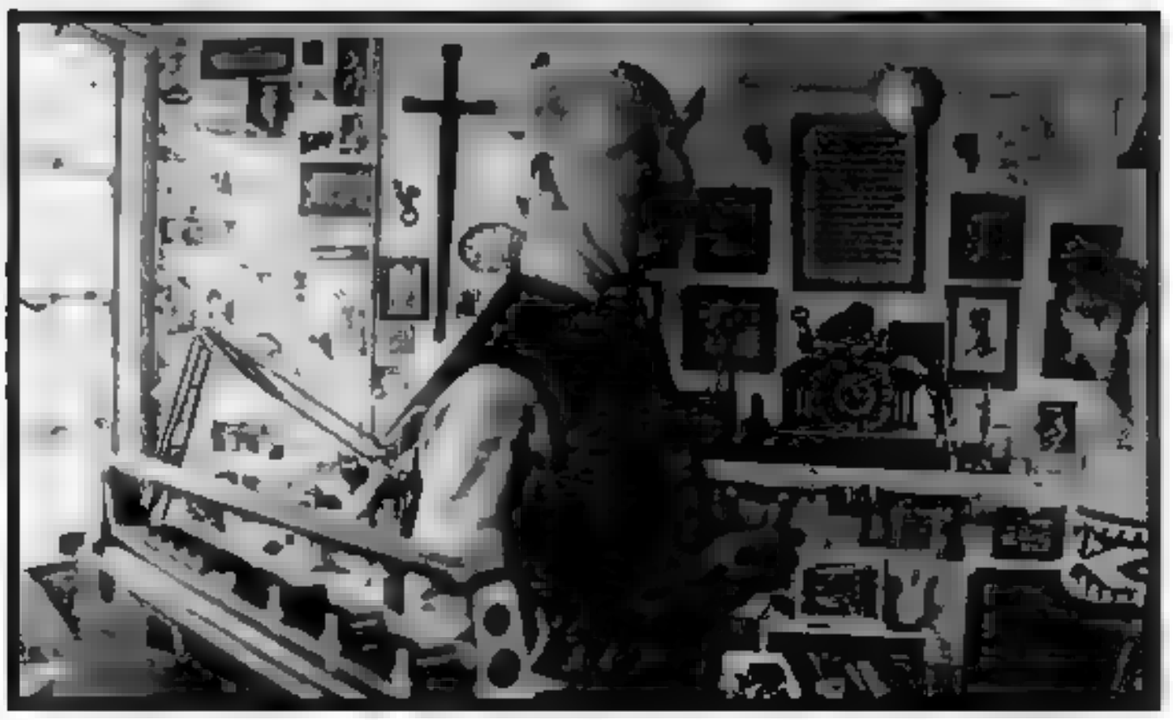
In 1951 John created the schoolgirl 'Lettice Leefe' for *EAGLE*'s companion paper *Girl* and then 'Sir Boldasbrass' for *Swift* in 1954. Lettice survived when *Girl* was absorbed into *Princess* in 1964 and continued in that paper until 1967, making it *Girl*'s longest running strip.

In the mid fifties John devised an ingenious method of making animated cartoons, using drawings animated by hidden cardboard levers and split pins and *Captain Pugwash* moved to television. This simple method meant that John was able to produce the programmes himself and retain control of the finished product, achieving a situation that many creative artists have longed for. The cartoons were a success and John went on to produce *Mary, Mungo and Midge*, *Sir Prancelot* and *The Ark Stories* for television.

Alongside his television cartoons and books for children John also drew a weekly three frame 'Captain Pugwash' strip for the *Radio Times* for eight years and contributed cartoons to the *Catholic Herald* for forty years.

Like many members of the *Eagle Society* I met John on our weekend in Rye in 1993, where he had made his home since 1988. John took us on a guided tour of the town, which was also the setting for his last Captain Pugwash adventure. He presented us all with a copy of the book, called *Captain Pugwash and the Huge Reward*, which he autographed and drew an individual picture of Pugwash in each. He took us to his home, appropriately adorned with a small ship's cannon in front of the house and showed us round his studio. It was a memorable weekend, made even more so by John's generosity and enthusiasm. It was a privilege to meet him. He will be greatly missed. ❑

Over the page:
Bill Rudling's recollections of John Ryan



John Ryan remembered

by William Rudling

John Ryan left a treasure chest of happy memories. It's full of great cartoon characters; Captain Pugwash, Harris Tweed, Lettice Leefe to name only three. More precious than these cartoon creations was John Ryan; a warm-hearted man and a wonderful human being.

In 1993 I visited the ancient cinque port of Rye, along with other members of the *Eagle Society*. We were part of a week-end event to celebrate John's work and the cartoons created by him for the *EAGLE* Picture Strip Weekly. I believe there were about twenty-six of us - a pretty good turn out for the event. The accommodation at the Queen's Head also provided the venue for the Saturday evening's club dinner. I kept my dinner place setting and on the back is the summary of what we ate; soup,beef and profiteroles; not salt beef, maggots and hard tack, thank-goodness. After coffee we had the first part of the Harris Tweed play-reading. Those taking part were Keith Howard, Roger Coombes, the author David Gould, a young Richard Sheaf and John himself.

On Sunday, John and Priscilla welcomed us to their home and studios. John's studio over-looked the moody landscape of Romney Marches - the haunt of smugglers. Earlier John had taken us on a conducted tour of the cobbled streets of Rye and by the time we had arrived at his house, our heads were full images of ruthless gangs of pirates, smugglers, bohemian writers and artists who left a rich legacy of local history. One tangible link with smugglers and Captain Pugwash was the distinctive black lantern with a long snout. About eighteen inches in length, the lantern had a tiny aperture. An essential tool that controlled the light source and enabled you to communicate safely with your partners in crime.

In the comfort of his living room John answered questions about his career. His *EAGLE* connection began in 1950 when a friend gave him an invitation to meet Marcus Morris, founder and editor of the forthcoming *EAGLE* Weekly. As a result of the meeting John had a contract to draw a weekly cartoon strip. "This," he said, "was the best wedding present Priscilla and I could have wished for." Looking at the Harris Tweed strips now, reminds me of the 1950s Elstree comedy films, so popular at the time. The actor Jack Hawkins would have been the perfect choice to play Harris Tweed. I'm not sure if the second half of the Harris Tweed play-reading took place after this discussion or before. I can remember clearly an excellent piece of character acting by John, playing the part of the villain.

Several years later along a came the BBC offer to televise Captain Pugwash. It was extraordinary how John Ryan managed to adapt and animate the Captain Pugwash stories. John created the unique answer to a shoestring budget imposed on him by the BBC, he and Priscilla made jointed two-dimensional puppets. I wonder if the inspiration for these puppets came from the traditional silhouette puppet theatres of Asia. Serving in India and Burma during the Second World War, I'm sure John would have seen this form of street entertainment.

The pirate was about to have a second lease of life when Pugwash was recreated in 1997. I congratulated him on the good news and the possibility of TV royalties. "Maybe I'll end up the richest man in the graveyard," he said, adding, "It's a case of royalties paid after production expenses have been met."

I feel John Ryan belongs to a unique style of cartooning - so English, I regard it as "the British School of Cartoonists with an eccentric, quirky style". I would put Ronald Searle and Roland Emett in that category too.

In my studio I have one of John's postcards pinned up showing Captain Pugwash in front of the old town of Rye. John pin-pricked one of the windows in the illustration to indicate which of the twinned houses was his. At the end of each day I look at John's postcard when I turn out the lights in my studio. ❑

POSTBAG

Please send letters to: Keith Howard, 25A Station Road, Harrow HA1 2UA

Letters may be edited for space, or other reasons

Dear *Eagle Times*,

Sorry to hear Geoffrey Bond is not very well. Stella gives me an idea of his situation.

Life goes on here, a sort of separate bungalow colony of over 65s on the outskirts of the town, with the general manager and gardener/handyman to keep an eye on us. Mostly widows. There is one who is 102, looks great, hears, sees, talks sense and walks a mile or more every day, gardens and does her housework, but most impressive of all, beats the lot of us at the weekly Scrabble tournament. She prefers to watch Wimbledon at present which gives us a chance. So, me, clocking up 90 this year, am a mere kid.

I keep busy painting portraits. It is a pity that I am not too good at landscape, because the country around here is magnificent. Right now the town is crowded, being the time of the Regatta.

Amazing how you manage to keep *Eagle Times* going each quarter without repetition. The *EAGLE* only lived for 13 years (I don't count the IPC bit).

I note that the members at the dinners are getting longer in the tooth, as to be expected.

Keep going, great work.

Stay well, stay lucky.

MARTIN AITCHISON (Henley on Thames)

E.T. Good to hear from you Martin. Nice to know all is well with you in Henley.

Dear *Eagle Times*,

Thanks for the Summer issue of *Eagle Times*. The cover of a Peregrine Falcon and other wildlife art by Tom Adams was superb. I would like to see more wildlife articles from *EAGLE* in *E.T.*

Nice to read of the Society week-end in North London. Charles Chilton's line of "No thanks - I've just eaten!" was great.

The Postbag looks a bit bare so thanks to Geoff Provins and Reg Hoare, but where are the other members? Come on guys, if you want the Society to continue, put pen to paper and give the Team the support they deserve. The letters page is a key part of the magazine.

Is there any chance of articles on the *Eagle Annuals* and the *Eagle Holiday Specials* showing the covers? This may have been done in the past but not in my time in the Society.

On a different note, I think that the new *Star -Trek* film has shown that there is a market for big budget, retro Sci-Fi films so bring on the *Dan Dare* movie!

Best Wishes,

IAN WHEELER (Harrowgate)

E.T. Hope you also enjoy our George Backhouse article in this issue, Ian. We would echo your call for more letters from the members. It is the life blood of the magazine and it is helpful when planning articles. We occasionally mention *Eagle Annuals*, and we hope to include something on the *Eagle Holiday Specials* in a future issue.

Dear *Eagle Times*,

How nice to see Ron Embleton's 'Heroes of the West' illustrations from the Rice Krispies packets in the Spring issue. How well I remember them.

Kind regards,

DAVID HAMMOND (Broadstairs)

E.T. You were one of several members who expressed their pleasure at seeing them, David.

Dear *Eagle Times*,

Very many thanks for the latest issue - there must be quite a few readers saying "Thank God for an Alan Vince-free issue at last"!

How sad to hear of the passing of Giorgio Bellavitis, a real talent in the field of strip illustration. How I wish some of the so-called artists who now try to portray the adventures of Dan Dare had his skills: We, who read the original *EAGLE* and

Express Weekly were blessed with seeing true artists who had skill and talent, unlike the amateurs of today who, we are told, hate any suggestion that they just can't draw.

Loved the piece on Harry Bishop's 'Rex Keene'. Here, again, was another great artist who could actually draw and used colour well. To be honest we were totally spoiled in the fifties and sixties with so many talented artists. How sad that most of these people are no longer with us because they just don't make 'em like that anymore!

About Andrew Coffey's 'Man From Nowhere' article:

Isn't Volstar in the foreground with Digby and Pierre? The Theron talking to "the newcomer" (Lex O'Malley) is an unnamed Theron. I was lucky to be able to make same-size copies of both originals of this page (*EAGLE* and Dragon's Dream) before Dorothy died - but I never managed to get the jigsaw version!

It is a little sad that the Postbag only seems to feature a few letters, two of them from the same person. Do you get so little reaction for your efforts? Maybe you should start having a pin-up centrefold to get us old guys involved ... maybe Spacemate of the Month?

All for now - all the best to you all.

Cheers,

ALAN VINCE (Chatham)

E.T. Not a bad idea, Alan. And perhaps your letter will prompt some other members to put pen to paper. We can but hope.

Dear Members,

Just a few lines of apology and explanation for a couple of errors in my 'Operation Saturn Revisited' article which appeared in the Summer issue of *Eagle Times*. That quote from the story "many races on many moons" appeared as "many faces". This was due to an old injury to my left index finger which causes me from time to time to hit the "f" instead of the "r". I get through a vast amount of Tippex. The other blurb I have no excuse for. The sentence in question should have read "Blasco is a Spanish name". Sorry.

Yours contritely,

KEITH HOWARD (Harrow)

Dear *Eagle Times*,

I was pleased to receive my copy of the Summer *E.T.* several days early. In my feature 'The Man From Nowhere' I happened to mention something in the strip that came straight from Alexander Korda's film *Things to Come*. In my original draft of the feature it was actually the airlifts at Spacefieet, that I was referring to. Interesting, too, to read Geoff Provins' letter on Enceladus the Saturnian moon found to have large geysers (but no Thork geezers). There is one geyser that shoots water or water vapour far out into space. In the magazine I read (*Creation* June-August 2009) it shows a image of it in action. Enceladus' orbit is affected by another of Saturn's moons, Dione, and it seems to have great influence on the entire Saturnian system as a whole.

Doubtless future stories of Dan Dare by *Eagle Society* members will have Dan returning to Saturnia, that will involve the fountains in thrilling new adventures.

I was unable to attend the *Eagle Weekend* again this year but hopefully I will see you all at Southport next year.

Yours hopefully,

ANDREW COFFEY (Gorleston, Great Yarmouth)

E.T. And we hope so too, Andrew. In fact the more the merrier as it will the Sixtieth Anniversary of the birth of *EAGLE*.

Dear *Eagle Times*,

I was delighted and surprised to find yesterday the mini-biography of my father, J.H.G. ("Don") Freeman on your blog pages. A really good and heart-warming piece of work! (I am the son Richard acknowledged by David Gould in *ET* Refs at the end of the bio, who attended your 2002 conference with my brother Nick).

I had not come across your really excellent blog pages before yesterday - this has given a lift to the week.

Best wishes,

RICHARD FREEMAN

E.T. Thanks for you kind comments. Will says it's good to hear his work on the blog is appreciated - especially when the feedback is from someone close to one of *EAGLE*'s former contributors. ❑

Pop Music During *EAGLE* Times *Part 17*

by John Kobylecky

Pirates' Nemesis - Anthony Wedgwood-Benn

The year was an alarming time for record companies. If it wasn't already bad enough that in 1965 singles' sales had been ten million down on 1964, then it truly was the source of some consternation to find that in 1966 sales had slumped by yet another ten million on the previous year's figures. Indeed, sales levels had receded to figures not seen since the mid-1950s, before the advent of the rock 'n' roll era. The company bosses themselves were quick to lay the blame at the door of the much maligned pirate radio stations, whose number had increased to ten by the time of Anthony Wedgwood Benn's keynote speech on the subject in August, however – albeit with the benefit of hindsight – closer analysis showed that a more complicated and interwoven series of dynamics were in play, and playing an integral part in the dramatic sales short-fall.

First, and foremost, the continuing march of technology had seen the growth of home taping capabilities in the household, and many were taking the option to record rather than to purchase. This situation was also about to get a lot worse. For the nonce the home taper was dutifully winding and re-winding his 6 inch diameter recording tapes onto the deck, but on the near-horizon the much more user friendly cassette-tape was coming. Then came the growth in sales of the L.P. Here, the sales potential was first recognised in the wake of the death of Jim Reeves in 1964. Eleven albums were released under his imprint during that year, and a previously Cinderella market was galvanised. Beyond the unfortunate aforementioned demise, the timely release of the film *The Sound of Music* was also significant. The sound-track reached No. 1 in the LP charts on the 5th June 1965 and did not finally vacate pole position until the close of 1967. During its 68 week residency at the top the only interruptions came from the Beatles, the Stones and the Monkees.

Shadowing all this, the basic social dynamics of a progressively increasing – almost burgeoning – student population during the decade facilitated the birth, and then the rise, of the progressive music scene. Or of niche marketing, if you will. Figures tell the tale, and a run-down of the Top Twenty selling singles of the year proved quite sobering reading:

1	**Green Green Grass of Home** – Tom Jones	905
2	**Distant Drums** – Jim Reeves	710
3	**Strangers In the Night** – Frank Sinatra	570
4	**Yellow Submarine** – Beatles	550
5	**These Boots Were Made' Walking** – N Sinatra	535
6	**19th Nervous Breakdown** – Rolling Stones	500
7	**Paperback Writer** – Beatles	496
8	**Sun Ain't Gonna Shine Anymore** – Walker B.	465
9	**What Would I Be?** – Val Doonican	450
10	**Good Vibrations** – Beach Boys	446
11	**Reach Out, I'll be There** – 4 Tops	436
12	**Spanish Flea** – H Alpert	386
13	**Pretty Flamingo** – Manfred Mann	352
14	**You Don't Have to Say'** – D Springfield	348
15	**Paint it Black** – Rolling Stones	331
16	**You Were on My Mind** – C St. Peters	328
17	**Make the World Go Away** – E Arnold	322
18	**A Groovy Kind of Love** – Mindbenders	321
19	**Michelle** – Overlanders	316
20	**Keep on Running** – Spencer Davis Group	315

Had Spencer Davis' 315,000 sale happened in 1965 he would not have been inside the annual Top 30, and in 1964 he would have been outside the annual Top 50. Truth was, with the exception of a brief hiatus during the Humperdinck-inspired 1967, the singles market had entered a slump which was to endure for a beat generation, until the rise of glam-rock in 1972.

Aside from this pessimism the world still looked to England as the epicentre of youth culture, and swinging London was still going strong. The release of the film *Blow Up* emphasised that strength, even as it paid homage to it, and the overall quality of the musical fare seemed quite undimmed. However, the release of a mere two Beatles singles during the year suggested that the nation's trend-setters were, maybe, heading off in different directions. On January 21st George Harrison married Pattie Boyd, and before the year was out both John and Paul had decamped into individual film projects.

Spencer Davis Group

The presence of the other Beatles was not required as Lennon took on a part in *How I Won the War* and McCartney penned the musical score for the Boulting Brothers' *Wedlocked*, but then - come to think of it - only one of the Fab Four joined George in church to witness the wedding vows.

This unaccustomed reticence extended to the tills where no Beatles' item vied for the coveted Christmas No. 1 spot. Instead, this fell into the lap of Tom Jones, who spent seven weeks at the top, largely unopposed. **Green Green Grass of Home** went on to rack up a further 300,000+ sales in 1967, where it proved the year's 31st best selling disc, and comfortably surpass the magic million. Originally waxed by Jerry Lee Lewis, the American had not considered the number to "singles material" and had confined release to his *Country Songs for City Folks* album.

Distant Drums likewise hailed from a somewhat dubious antecedence when Roy Orbison had considered it to be merely B side material when coupling it with **Falling**, in 1963. However, Reeves' posthumous magic was, clearly, still quite undimmed, and the number spent a month at the top from September into October. Frank Sinatra turned fifty at the beginning of the year, and record company publicists deemed that the 17th - 23rd January would be Sinatra week. In the first instance it did seem that daughter Nancy had been the main beneficiary from such publicity, but dad continued to remain on the public mind, and the subsequent feature of **Strangers in the Night** in the film *A Man Could Get Killed* did eventual sales no harm at all. For the record, further spent three weeks at No. 1 in June, to daughter's lone week at the top in February.

Nancy Sinatra

Sales earlier in the year were undeniably enthusiastic, and **These Boots Were Made For Walking** achieved weekly sales of over 100,000 despite having to settle for a runner-up berth behind the Stones. Against the latter, the Beatles confined their chart efforts to early and late summer. **Paperback Writer** spent two weeks at No. 1 in June, and **Yellow Submarine** was at the top for a month in August. The latter was a particularly strong single, being backed by **Eleanor Rigby** – to call it a B side would be an impertinence - but fell foul of being featured on the concomitant *Revolver* LP, sitting on adjacent record shelves.

The **Sun Ain't Gonna Shine Anymore** also spent a month at the top in the spring, and was the Walker brothers' reworking of an original Frankie Valli miss. The Beach Boys' **Good Vibrations** was the stuff of legend, and has since become the stuff of even greater legend. Compiled over a period of several months and during the course of thirty separate record sessions, this painstakingly assembled record achieved a new and unique sound and offered a possible introduction to the progressive music scene. Taken from the album *Pet Sounds* the song was emblematic of the group's most productive year, which witnessed four best-selling singles in the (annual) first fifty-two and no fewer than five album releases.

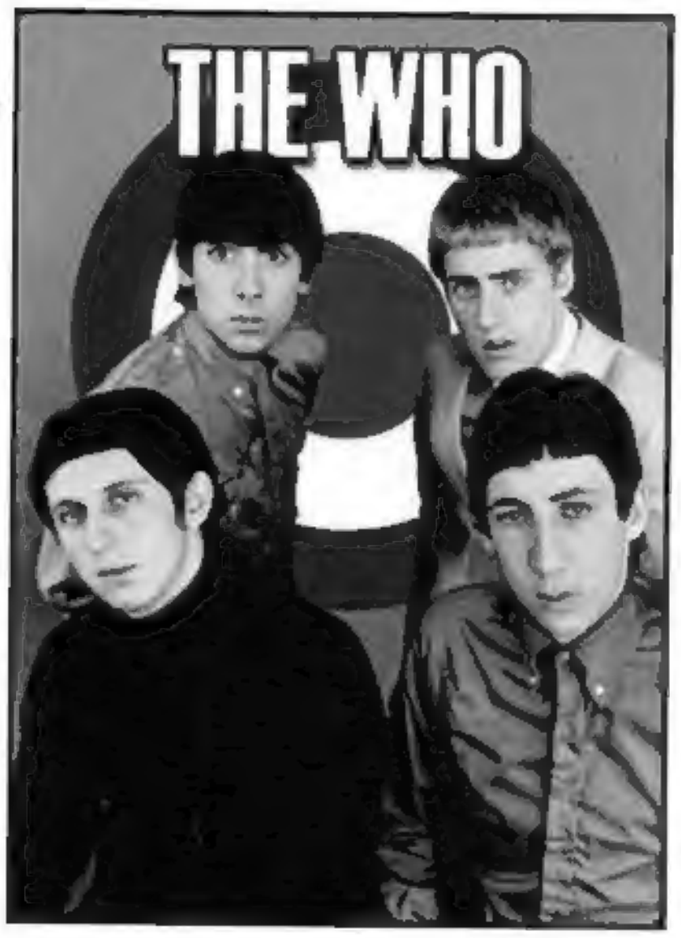
However, for all that success, and for all that acclaim – both critical and cultural – the Yanks' very best still could not exceed the efforts of our own – well, Ireland's own – Val Doonican, whose **What Would I Be** was second only to the Welshman in December. The Motown sound, so perfectly exemplified by the Supremes in previous years, was now best represented by the Four Tops, whose **Reach Out, I'll Be There** spent a month at No. 1 until the arrival of the Beach Boys.

January: Reviewing the year chronologically is to acknowledge immediately that the actual sales of **Keep on Running** were on an absolute par with **19th Nervous Breakdown**, but were spread over two years at a ratio 3:2. Nevertheless, having thrust its way to the runner-up spot at the end of '65 the Spencer Davis group duly eased to the top at the first opportunity in 1966. The Beatles, who might have forestalled this happening, positively eschewed releasing **Michelle** from their 'Rubber Soul' album, so it was left to someone else to do the deed … frankly, it could have been anybody.

February: The sales enthusiasm of January persevered, and both Crispian St. Peters and Herb Alpert achieved worthy shop returns despite peaking no higher than No. 3 … indeed, the latter proved to be the best-selling instrumental of the year and persisted in the charts for the best part of five months. An innovation on 'Juke Box Jury' saw the introduction of a computer for measuring votes, thereby allowing for the register of an instant audience reaction.

Herb Alpert

March: Utter consternation amongst fans on the 12th with the surprise announcement/ dropped bombshell that Cliff Richard was going to retire from the music business, and become a school teacher. Had he seen the 1st March broadcast – a fifty minute extravaganza on the BBC – of the Beatles at the Shea stadium, and decided that he could no longer compete with the likes of this? Whatever. The members of the Cliff Richard fan club immediately announced the formation of a written petition, pleading with him not to quit, and the BBC record-



The Who

ing of now long past events emphasised the truism that Beatlemania - at least in this country - was now officially dead. There was an almighty stink over the Who's **Substitute** which saw the legal impounding of shop stock, and a resort to the crown courts. It was enough to provoke the release – this same month – of a hastily formed follow-up, **A Legal Matter**, which may not have been destined to do much in the charts, but, nevertheless, got a lot off the chest. For the record, the problem with **Substitute** was with the primacy of copyright of the B-side and nothing to do with song content, and it eventually peaked at No. 5. For his part, drummer Keith Moon announced his decision to leave the group after one of their typically hyperactive stage routines left him nursing an (accidental) smack in the mouth.

April: ITV's flagship pop prog. 'Thank Your Lucky Stars" celebrated its fifth anniversary with a body blow, announcing the show would be axed later in the year. By way of sugaring the pill, we were assured that the final 25th June transmission would be a date to remember, and would showcase a live performance from the Beatles. At sea, Tony Blackburn climbed the 163-foot mast of the good ship *Mi Amigo* to effect emergency running repairs. Seeing as finance didn't allow for a resident qualified electrician to live permanently on board, it was comforting to know that the man who had been the widely acknowledged voice of Radio Caroline since his debut on 29th July 1964, was also master of mend and make do, lest we should be denied his purple prose. Manfred Mann's **Pretty Flamingo** encountered censorship problems with the BBC but was well featured by the pirates and spent three weeks at No. 1. Alongside this, Dusty Springfield concluded the month at the top with her only No. 1 record of the decade, **You Don't Have to Say You Love Me**. *Funny Girl* had its London premier with Barbra Streisand in the lead role and Elvis Presley appeared on silver screen in *Frankie & Johnny*, the attendant title song peaking at No. 21.

May: Tony Blackburn vacated Radio Caroline on the 21st to take residence at the rival Radio London. Question. Did the move have anything to do with recent events, or had a resignation already been tendered prior to recent events, meaning that at that time he was a man considered surplus to requirements. Decidedly under the latter heading was the 42,000-strong Cliff Richard fan club, which announced a winding down leading to complete closure by April 1967. Meanwhile, 22 year-old club secretary, Jane Vane, who had ran the club since its inception, jumped ship and relinquished her post, forthwith. To some fanfare, and an advanced sale of some 300,000 copies, the Stones released their follow-up single **Paint It Black**, only to find the awaiting market lukewarm. For one week in May it did beat the Troggs' **Wild Thing** to the top spot – not that that was anything to write home about - and it took the best part of two months to eventually clear initial, optimistic, sales orders.

June: There was a general call for a ban on Bob Dylan's **Rainy Day Women Nos. 12 & 35** and the Byrds' **Eight Miles High**. It was difficult to ascertain from exactly where such disapprobation originated but somehow the office of the Home Secretary – no less – got involved. To their eternal and everlasting credit the BBC refused to accede to the siren calls, and continued to broadcast. Women peaked at No. 9 and Miles at No. 24. There was a surprise, if not utterly astonishing to behold, appearance of the Beatles on Top of the Pops, promoting **Paperback Writer**. The BBC had kept the entire negotiations for this television coup under strictest security, and nobody – nowhere – could ever have guessed. The impending, much trailed ITV 'Ace in the Hole' was thus most effectively trumped. Roy Orbison's wife, Claudette, died on the 7th after her motorcycle collided with a truck on the road to Nashville. Clearly on the look-out to sense elements of a dedication in Orbison's next song, the press unfairly saw a tribute to the lady in the subsequent release **Too Soon to Know** and accused Orbison of being morbid and macabre. It took some time for people to realise they were wrong, and the item eventually peaked at No. 3.

July: Similarly misunderstood, perhaps, was John Lennon when he mused that the Beatles were currently more popular than Jesus. Perhaps. The wry observation stirred barely a raised eyebrow on these shores, but Americans didn't do irony and the remarks raised a storm of fury stateside, resulting in record-burning bonfires and denouncements of Lennon as some sort of emissary of the devil. Their words, not mine. By some strange logic the Ku Klux Klan got involved in the outrage, and the tone of voice became more incendiary. The Beatles were transformed into an undesirable foreign element tainting the purity of religion and the American way. In truth, such as this had already been seen before. Earlier in the year Barry Sadler had gone top Stateside with the **Ballad of the Green Berets** ... a record which is nothing short of required listening in the context of this review. The tone was militaristic, uncompromising and hectoring. An exhortation to support the flag, the boys in the field, the Vietnam war and - well - kick some ass.

Barbra Streisand

Chris Farlowe

Sadler was an ex-Staff Sergeant bringing the dynamics of the parade ground to the airwaves. Square bashing for mods. It comfortably sold in excess of two million copies, and was the top selling single of 1966. Over here, the reaction was not so unquestioning and obedient and the number peaked at No. 24. By a strange, ironic twist, Sadler was left vying for a spot in the middle-twenties by a truly British variation of Sadler's strident intonation which was the Master Singers' line by line oratory of **The Highway Code**! Wise words. And as for Lennon, Writer was replaced at the top by the Kinks' **Sunny Afternoon**, and then by Chris Farlowe's **Out of Time**.

August: By his mighty hand? Presumably fired by the raving cant of the previous month the Longview, Texas local radio station – Radio Klue – staged a Beatle-artefact burning ceremony for night-time listening. A real pop-up-in-smoke special. The following morning a single black cloud suddenly appeared over the scene of the pyre and a single bolt of lightning came down, knocking out the Radio Klue station manager and tossing him into the heap of record ashes. The Who refused to promote **The Kids are Alright** which was really worth more than its No. 48 peak and the Troggs spent a couple of weeks at the top **With a Girl Like You**. Such a placing left the Beach Boys' **God Only Knows** in the runner-up spot which had been a fate also suffered by **Sloop John B** earlier in May. Adroitly timed to coincide with a keynote speech by Wedgwood Benn that he intended to scupper the pirates for good in the near future, the BBC looked forward to their impending return as the nation's principal broadcaster by declaring the 1st to the 6th as a musical marathon. Staged on the Light Programme to 'Swing into Summer' a grand parade of pop talent – as they declared it – eventually witnessed the total number of headline acts reach 44 over the six days. Starring roles belonged to Mr. Acker Bilk, the Bert Weedon 4, Don Lang's Frantic Five, Mrs. Mills and Wout Steenhuis. Wout Steenhuis!

Raquel Welch

Elvis' latest, *California Holiday*, played to largely empty seats. It wasn't entirely his fault because patrons had a choice of where to spend their hard-earned between this and *One Million Years, B.C.* In the latter a scarcely attired Raquel Welch sporting frugally assembled tufts of fur - check - and designer footwear - well, Okay - battled it out with a variety of prehistoric dinosaurs of the ilk of Tyrannosaurus Rex. I never believed it myself … you're not going to tell me that cave-women looking like that ever roamed the earth. I also had my doubts when I saw the publicity stills of Mr. Presley with arms out-stretched and biceps bulging, supporting a leading lady - seated - on each wing. However, it was in line with the continuing notion of a he-man type who could knock-out a rampaging raptor any day, and was generally at home in black leathers. Meanwhile, the music itself told a slightly different tale. Suggested a different ensemble. A get-up of heavy-knit sweaters and winter woollens would not have looked out of place when taking **Love Letters** to a respectable high of No. 6, and was a follow-up much in tune with the previous year's **Crying in the Chapel**, having been first waxed in 1945. A decidedly Christmas-themed release was also waiting in the wings.

September: The Roaring Sixties released **We Love the Pirates** as those off-shore attempted to stave off impending ship-wreck. Unanimously they played it to distraction although record distributors Selector refused to handle it, and it was extremely difficult to get hold of a copy. Similarly impressive was the 40-yard petition presented to Cliff Richard on the steps of the London Palladium imploring him not to end it all and persevere in the music business. The document itself was signed by no fewer than ten thousand people and was an impressive enough tome as long as you didn't dwell too much on the fact that Harry Webb's fan club membership currently stood at 42,000. The Small Faces did very well to squeak in a week's berth in the pole position with **All or Nothing** in between long residencies by the Beatles and Jim Reeves. **Bend It** by Dave Dee, Dozy, Beaky, Mick and Tich only just undersold this (247,000 to 256,000) but didn't get its timing right and had to be content with the runner-up spot. Early hearings of the latter left some scope to be outraged, if that was your bent, and censors gave it a slightly querulous look. However, it was in fact, about a dance and how to make the moves. The Americans, who maybe should have known better given their traditions of the hoedown and the square dance, were in a mood to imagine something much more different and salacious and ordered a complete restructure of the song for U.S release.

Dave Dee, Dozy, Beaky, Mick and Tich

Alma Cogan

It probably didn't help that a sudden burst of songs, all with a degree of sexual innuendo in the lyrics, happened onto the market all at once. The Who's **I'm a Boy** peaked at two, the Troggs' **I Can't Control Myself** reached No. 3 and the Stones' **Have You Seen Your Mother Baby, Standing in the Shadows** got to No. 5. Nominally, with two number ones already in the bank, the latter meant that the Stones were, de facto, better than the Beatles in 1966. However, the sum total of all three hit singles was never so much as one million copies. David Jacobs affected his last appearance on Top of the Pops, being replaced by Simon Dee.

October: The ever quotable Jonathan King stated that "free love is considered almost absolutely natural behaviour by a large portion of British youth" to kick-off thereby the subject which was to become the story of 1967. Georgie Fame disbanded his Blue-flames only to see one of his ex-number - Glen Hughes - literally burn to death, soon after. Equally tragic, and no less dramatic, was the sudden demise of Alma Cogan who had gamely continued to perform even in her final days. Two highly individualistic songs got to No. 4. **They're Coming to Take Me Away, Ha-haaa!** was an evocation of impending madness fittingly augmented by a B side which called the song backwards, and **Winchester Cathedral** was a gentle and affectionate pastiche on the musical mores of the 1920s. The former was the brainchild of recording engineer Jerry Samuels who thought it best, in the circumstances, to style himself as Napoleon XIV. The latter was from the New Vaudeville Band and the lead singer got his message across via an antique megaphone … in this get-up he wouldn't have looked out of place coxing a four at Henley. Unsurprisingly, the BBC banned one of these items. Mystery surrounded the continuing absence of Bob Dylan which was starting to get serious. Last seen in August when a motorcycle accident left him with broken neck vertebrae, even close friends and confidantes were unsure of his whereabouts, or the exact extent of his injuries. His manager, Albert Grossman, also refused to say, and meanwhile announced the indefinite postponement of Dylan's scheduled book release and TV special, due in November.

New Vaudeville Band

November: Muscleman Elvis Presley was presented with two awards to honour him as the public figure setting standards American youth would most like to follow. Meanwhile, a recent fitness regime aimed at cutting down excess weight had apparently borne fruit and "the Pelve" was pleased to announce that he now weighed-in – officially – at 170 pounds. The Supremes made a welcome return to form with **You Can't Hurry Love** which peaked at No. 3. Their last top ten hit had been in April 1965. It was replaced inside the top three by Manfred Mann's **Semi-detatched Suburban Mr. James**, another of the year's idiosyncratic fare. Equally difficult to fathom was the Who's continuing refusal to promote their own music which – this time – compromised the release of **Happy Jack** … an eventual aspirant to the Top Three. There was an all DJ line-up on 'Juke Box Jury' at the turn of the month, with Messrs. Savile, Murray, Dee and Freeman taking the hot seats.

December: The BBC banned the promotion video of the Kinks' **Dead End Street** because it showed the performers as undertakers. Obviously a ribald comment on the content of the song, the broadcasting corporation, clearly, did not do ribaldry. "It's sick," said spokesman Mike Ledgerwood. Equally unwelcome was Walker Brother Scott Engel who was required to vacate his monastic retreat on the Isle of Wight, after just seven days' meditation. Apparently, the original idea had been to take a ten-day sojourn to get away from idolising fans prior to the huge influx of idolising fans onto monastery grounds. Jeff Beck quit the Yardbirds, citing poor health masking a myriad of other reasons. With Jimmy Page similarly trailed to exit the same way, the outlook looked dubious for the beat combo. The Seekers' **Morningtown Ride** was the principal runner-up to Tom Jones' runaway success and would have been at No. 11 in the year-end charts had all its sales been taken into account. However, sales patterns split into 1967 in the ratio of 3:2. Donovan's **Sunshine Superman** was the other major success in the Yuletide charts, and peaked at No. 3. Eric Burden was a surprise intake on the Juke Box Jury in the run-up to Christmas and was not in the mood to show much goodwill to all men, his utter castigation of Frank Sinatra's **That's Life** being especially vituperative. Life got no higher than No. 46. Speculation continued to abound about the direction of the continuing relationship between Stones' guitarist Brian Jones and actress Anita Pallenberg. Earlier in the year Lulu had dealt with similar speculation about her romance with Luvvers' guitarist Alec Bell by summarily ditching the entire backing group. ❑

Donovan

DAN DARE and the RETURN of the MEKON

IT APPEARED TO BE THE FINAL CONFRONTATION BETWEEN TWO BEINGS WHOSE ADVENTURES HAD THRILLED A GENERATION. COLONEL DAN DARE, VALIANTLY FIGHTING TO SAVE EARTH FROM THE SWORN FOE OF MANKIND... THE COLD, MERCILESS MASTERMIND OF VENUS — **THE MEKON !**

ALL DEFENCE SCREENS ARE IN SHATTERS, MASTER. WE CANNOT HOLD OUT MUCH LONGER !

IT'S THE END, O MEKON. WE ARE FINISHED !

THOSE PUNY EARTH CREATURES CANNOT DEFEAT ME... THE GREATEST BRAIN IN THE UNIVERSE ! PREPARE MY PERSONAL ESCAPE VEHICLE !

IT IS USELESS, MASTER — THE ESCAPE CRAFT RECEIVED A DIRECT HIT !

THEN... I AM TRULY BEATEN !

ONE HOUR LATER...

OKAY, YOU GREEN-HEADED MONSTER... DO YOU FINALLY SURRENDER... UNCONDITIONALLY ?

I HAVE NO CHOICE, COLONEL DARE. BUT ENJOY YOUR MOMENT OF TRIUMPH, WHILE YOU HAVE THE CHANCE. ONE DAY, I WILL HAVE MY REVENGE !

THE WORLD SUPREME COURT, THE HIGHEST JUDICIAL BODY ON THE PLANET EARTH, GAVE ITS JUDGEMENT ON THE MEKON...

YOU HAVE BEEN FOUND GUILTY OF EVERY CRIME POSSIBLE AGAINST OUR PEOPLE. I SENTENCE YOU TO BE PLACED IN A LIFE SUPPORT CAPSULE, ENCLOSED IN A METEOR PRISON AND SET ADRIFT IN SPACE...

FOR EVER !

Cover illustrations: Gerry Embleton, New Eagle , 1982

***Eagle Times* design and layout: Will Grenham**